

THE

LONDON READER

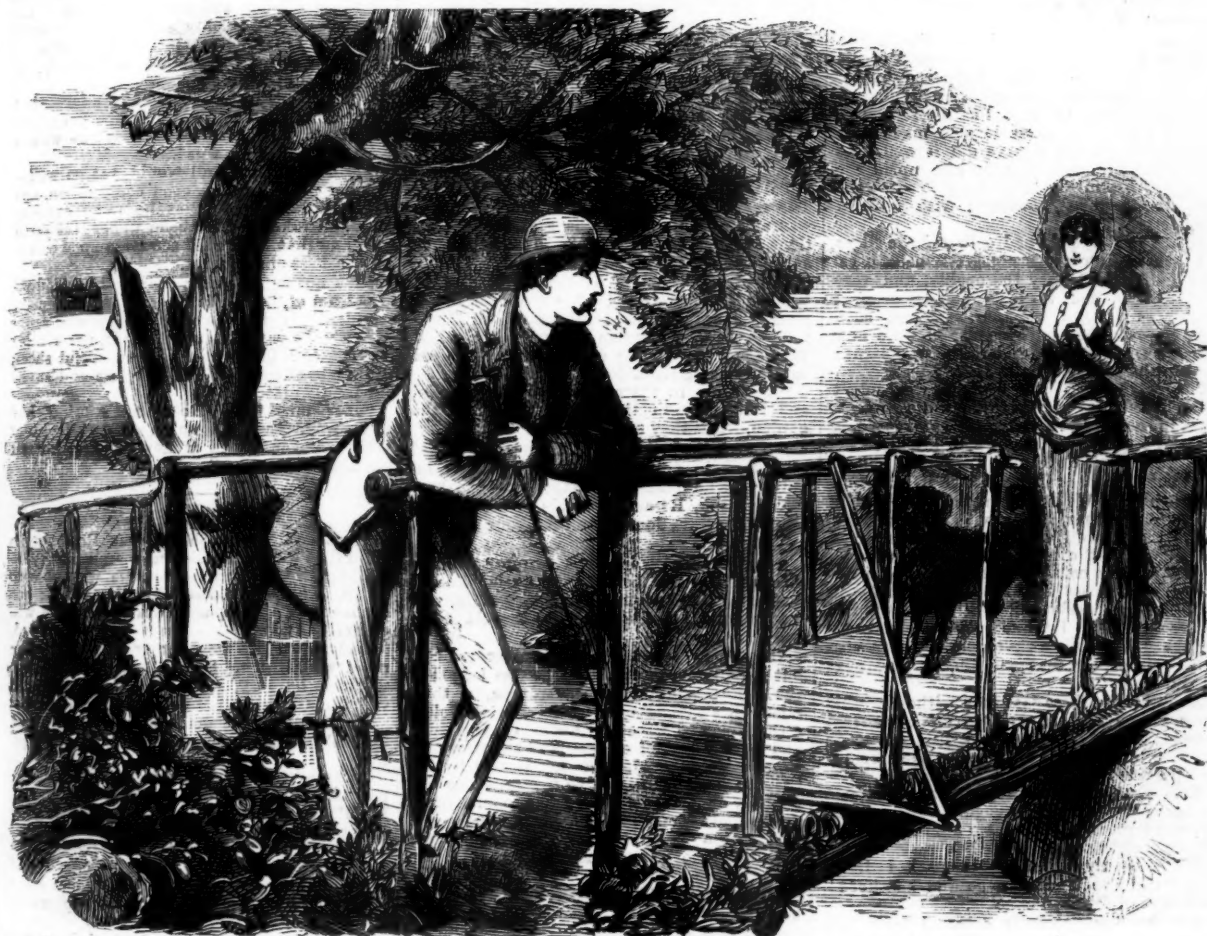
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[ALLAN RAISED HIS HEAD, AND THERE SHE WAS, GLAD IN WHITE, AND LADDIE BY HER SIDE.]

ROSAMOND'S HUSBAND.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHEN they had really gone, and the room was in darkness, Rosamond sat up and put her hands to her bursting heart. They were coming back—that was the awful thought that filled her mind. Her dressing-room was the focus of the whole business, and she was helpless and locked in. What was she to do? Were she to scream she would not be heard. "Those old walls were not the modern lath and plaster, but three or four feet thick. The doors were oak, and double. She felt like an ouse caught in a trap, and trembled from head to foot as she thought of the return of these ruffians—another agonising ordeal from the bull's eye lantern and, perhaps, the long knife. She could not get the words of a piece of poetry (Tennyson's "Fair Women") out of her head even at this moment, when her memory seemed torpid and every faculty concentrated on the present.

"One drew a sharp knife through my tender throat; And nothing more."

After some little time a feeling of desperation took possession of her. Why should she not do something? She had the use of her hands and feet. She might—yes, in one moment's flash of light—catch these villainous burglars in their own trap, and at any rate she would not, should they murder her, perish in vain.

Very slowly and stealthily—almost as if she still imagined them to be in the room—she slid out of bed, struck a match and lit a taper; then she went and laid her ear to the door. No sound—a deathlike silence—apparently the whole house was wrapped in sleep. Next she stole into the dressing-room. Her diamonds were still there, lying as they had been taken out of their cases in one glittering, careless heap.

A red woollen comforter, very dirty and worn, lay on the ground. Only for that she might have fancied it was all a dream. She hurried to the floor, and put the key in the outside of the lock, turning it several times to see that it moved freely. And Rosamond, it was well you did, for that precaution subsequently saved your life.

Just at this moment her quick ear caught a

faint sound below in the garden, and she blew out the light (it would never, never do for them to discover the dressing-room lit up), and, under shelter of the darkness, and becoming bolder every moment, she stole to the big bow-window at the end of the room, in which stood the dressing-table and mirror just facing the door.

She put her ear to the sash, and heard a ladder heavily lifted and dragged and laid against it outside; she heard muttered voices, and then silence. They had gone away, and they would be back in her room shortly. She had not a second to lose. Very gently she opened the window. Yes, the ladder was there.

"Now Heaven give me strength," she said, taking the top of it firmly in both her hands, and nerving herself for a great effort. She raised it up from the window-sill; poised it backwards as far as her arms could reach, and let it go. It fell with what seemed to her a hideous crash among some laurels, but in reality it was only a dull, muffled thud.

How her heart beat! How her ears were aching to catch distant sounds! It was some time before she could nerve herself to pull

down the window once more—very, very gently—and then, her trap laid, she fled back to bed and buried her head in the clothes, and awaited the return of the robbers with their booty. How long they seemed! months—not merely hours! It seemed years since she had gone to bed, and so the leaden-footed moments crawled by—moments spent very agreeably by the trio downstairs.

The household were heavy sleepers, the walls and the carpets thick, and "Leery Billy," as he was called, was a cracksmen—the top of his profession.

He had long been the desire and the despair of all the police in the neighbourhood of his domicile, wherever it had happened to be. But he was far too clever and far too cunning, and boasted that he lived like a lord—never went in for a job unless it was made well worth his while, and always did it well. As to catching him and putting him up in the stone jug, they might as well try to catch the moon—he frequently declared with derisive complacency.

He and his two pals had collected the silver and thrust it into three big, green baize bags. Very dextrously, and very thoroughly, and very rapidly, they had made a clean sweep of salvers, candelabras, cups, bowls, and such small fry as forks and spoons, and were now enjoying what they considered a well-earned meal in the servants' hall.

They were supping on some very succulent relics of the late most excellent dinner, eating it in their fingers, and quaffing (according to taste) champagne, Madeira, or brandy.

"Come now," exclaimed Leery Billy, "we must not take more than will see us safely out of the premises. We'll have a ticklish business getting down that ladder with all the swag. Carry these small windows and holes down below! A man can't get his body through them," as if he considered it a personal insult that the premises had not been made with facilities for housebreaking. "Now I suppose you're all done? I'd like to leave a message for the cook—she's a tip-topper! But," with a hideous grin, "that will do, maybe, next time we call."

And thus the three goblins, without wiping their greasy fingers, drained off their last glasses; and taking up each a heavy bag, sat off once more for the chamber of the terrified and palpitating Rosamond.

This time a mere cursory glance was cast on her as they walked through. The good supper and liquor had made them not merely bold, but downright rash.

"The beauty is asleep," remarked Leery Billy, "and I've a mind to go and kiss her!" with a semi-drunken chuckle.

But he was promptly deterred from this performance by a more prudent pal, and they passed into the dressing-room without his carrying out his odious intention.

They were now very busy pulling out drawers and helping themselves liberally to whatever they fancied; and Rosamond, her heart hardened for this supreme effort, stole once more out of bed and crept on tiptoe to the door, which was about quarter open. Two men were bending over her dressing-case, which was on the floor, with their backs to her, and Leery Billy was humorously holding her diamond collar round his own ugly throat and grinning at himself in the big mirror.

She stood for a moment rooted to the spot, fascinated like a thing turned to immobility under some basilisk gaze. If her nerve failed her now she was lost!

She knew it, and made an effort, and one small hand crept to the door and drew it gently—oh! so gently—to her. But her action had been seen.

What was that Leery Billy beheld in the glass as well as his own ugly mug? The distant reflection of a girl in her nightgown about to shut the door!

With a savage snarl and a couple of blood-curdling oaths he snatched up the long knife and bounded down the room.

Now, Rosamond, for your life!

His hand was on the door, but she had shut it, and with the very last effort of frenzy and desperation had, with one instantaneous jerk, turned the key!

She was safe. No; the power of the men, storm and curse they never so loudly, all impotent against that old oak door and strong massive lock. They might push and shake and stamp, it did not matter. And now to rouse the house.

Trembling all over, and scarcely able to stand, she seized her dressing-gown and made her way to the door and down the corridor, and knocked at the first door and flung it open into darkness.

"Who's there?" said a sleepy man's voice. "I—Rosamond Dane! Quick! get up! There are some burglars in my room!"

"The deuce there are!" was the prompt reply, and somebody evidently was affectually roused.

To this next she gave the same message. The servants were roused, the whole house was afoot; lights were to be seen in all directions, and herds of people in very scanty attire asking excited questions.

Rosamond, as white as her dressing-gown, was surrounded. She led the way back to her room. There were two gentlemen, Lord Kingsford, a butler, footman, now in her train. When they got to the apartment she pointed to the dressing-room door and said,—

"They are in there; I've locked them in, and have thrown the ladder back into the garden. But they are armed."

"You locked them in?" exclaimed Lord Kingsford in amazement, looking at his revolver; as he placed his hand upon the key. "Keep back, Rosamond; this is not fit for you. You have done more than your share as it is."

Then leading her into the corridor the door was opened, and revealed the infuriated caged burglars, none so furious as Leery Billy, who foamed and bit, and was like a wild beast driven to bay.

He and his confederates were armed too, but their shots were wild. One was lodged in the ceiling, another in a wardrobe, a third missed fire altogether, and after some violent struggling and knocking about of furniture, and a great deal of cursing and swearing, the three were secured, their hands tied behind their backs, and marched off downstairs and securely shut up in the justice room till the police could remove them that morning.

It was a long time before the house subsided once more; and, indeed, there was very little repose for anyone after such exciting scenes, least of all for the heroine of the adventure.

She, of course, found a haven in another room, but her brain seemed as if it was beating through her head; her eyeballs felt on fire. She could not sleep, she could not even rest. She tumbled and tossed about till broad daylight streamed into the room, and then her maid came to the bedside with her customary cup of tea and slice of toast.

She found her in a raging fever and quite delirious; the strain upon her mind, the terrible two-hours tension had been too much. She showed every symptom of being in for a severe attack of brain fever.

There certainly would be no meeting with Allan in the garden. His disclosures must be postponed for a long time—perhaps now for always—for the fever ran through her veins like a flame, and in a day or two it began to be whispered that "Miss Dane was very, very ill—dangerously ill."

The fashionable guests departed one and all, leaving a quiet house for the invalid, and leaving her alone with Lady Germaine and her mother, who had come posting over in a great state of mind.

But Rosamond would not endure her in the room. She did not know her; she merely called her "the woman in black," and begged and implored her to go away.

And so she did after a little time, leaving

her daughter to the careful nurse-tending of Lady Germaine.

There was one guest who took his departure with the deepest reluctance, and you can guess who that guest was. He, however, went no further than half a mile from the lodges, taking up his abode at a little country inn, which had been a great place in the good old coaching days, and awaiting bulletins with the very deepest anxiety.

At last he resolved to take Lady Germaine into his confidence and tell her all, and of the spite fate seemed to have against him in keeping him and his wife apart—first by shipwreck, then by a misunderstanding, and, finally, by this dreadful illness.

Who shall paint Lady Germaine's face when she heard his tale? Who describe her ejaculations and her gestures? Someone with a more vivid pen than this!

She declared that all would yet go well—that her patient had a good constitution, and would pull through—that he must come at once and take up his abode under the same roof, and that he should see Rosamond on the very earliest opportunity.

"It's not so much her body as her mind we are afraid of," said Sir Everard to his guest, confidentially, in the privacy of his own sanctum. "My wife does not know it, nor realize it; but her brain received an awful shock that night she caught the burglars and saved our family plate!"

"Her mind! If Rosamond's mind had given way, what did aught else avail him? What was youth and money and health itself but dust and ashes?"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was quite true that it was Rosamond's mind that was more affected than her body.

She grew strong in health, she was able to sit up, to get up, to walk about her room; but her memory of the past six or seven years was generally a blank.

Lady Germaine was her grandmother; her maid was Maggie. She looked out from the windows on Drydd Marshes, and wondered why Mr. Cameron had not been to see her.

No mention was made of her mother, of Colonel Brand, of Amy Glen, or Lord Kingsford.

After a time he was admitted to see the patient with a caution. He bargained to see her alone; and certainly her appearance gave him a shock.

Her hair, once so abundant, had been cruelly cut, but all the same, wisely snipped off. What remained was short and curly, and these short curls all over her head changed her appearance a good deal.

Her face was white, her cheeks hollow, and her eyes sunken.

Her reception of him was another shock. The instant she saw him enter the room she jumped up from her seat, and rushed to him with an exclamation of welcome.

"Oh, Allan! what agony you've been getting those tickets for the theatre! I do so hate sitting here by myself. You have been away hours."

What was he to say, knowing he had been away for years?

"I am very sorry, Rosie."

"Yes," with a pout; "I should hope so. You forget what a few days we have to be together. The carriage is waiting to take us to the Bole; and I'm ready, as you see. Shall we start?"

"No, I think not this morning, Rosamond. It's very cold. But is there anything else to do—anything you would like?" looking round Lady Germaine's sitting-room as he spoke, helplessly.

"I'd much rather go out!" pettishly. "I don't think it's a bit too cold. However, I am to stay at home, I suppose we may as well play bédouille. Where are the cards?"

And as he rose to look for them, she said,—

"Oh, what an exquisite lovely fan that was!"

that came from the Rue de la Paix this morning, you extravagant Allan! You must not buy me any more lovely presents or you won't have any money left to take you out to Australia, though I shall be very glad if you haven't. Oh, you've got the cards and the markers, I see. Let me deal."

Rosamond was imagining a day in Paris six years previously, and soon entirely absorbed in a sequence, or a chance of double bezique, and seeing marriages with delightful eagerness.

Her partner played mechanically and badly. This raking up of old times, this tête-à-tête with Rosamond was trying past description. She was actually the old girlish Rosamond, and displayed her innocence and unconventionality and ignorance of the world in every speech. How different to the reality—the cool, collected, well-trained Miss Dane!

It happened thus every afternoon. He came regularly, and sat with Rosamond. There was no sign of amendment in her mind, but the colour had returned to her cheeks, the light to her eyes.

She went out driving and walking, and was completely restored to her bodily health; and yet every day Allan left her with a sorer, fiercer headache. She was dead to the present and to him.

She was always either in Paris or running about Drydd Marshes, or at school.

One day she had a sudden gleam of something else. She was sitting beside Lady Germaine, looking over a large book of prints, and she came to a picture of an infant in its mother's arms.

She gazed at it for a long time with a curious, strained expression of dawning conviction and wide opened, staring eyes.

Then she abruptly flung the book down, and, turning to Lady Germaine, buried her face in her lap, and burst into a storm of tears. She wept so violently and so unrestrainedly her companions were seriously alarmed. At last she sighed out, amid broken sobs—

"Oh, that is a picture of my—my baby! I never saw it. They took it away and buried it close to the church. Oh, what shall I do! what shall I do! I shall go mad!" wringing her hands in a kind of frenzy. "I saw its grave—so small, so small! A little green mound. I have all its pretty frocks. She, she said I ought to be ashamed to make them, but I wasn't. Only they were never worn. They are locked away in a drawer in grandmamma's room."

And here her grief again became quite uncontrollable.

Doctors were consulted, and several learned men came and laid their heads together, and took counsel.

It was a strange case, but all it wanted was time and complete repose.

There was no insanity in the Dane family (eccentricity was not madness), and it would pass away, and the young lady's mind spring back, as it were, to its former condition, and sooner or later quite recover its balance.

The fright and shock she had received was quite enough, in their opinion, to unhinge the mind of any woman.

She had better go back to Drydd, her birthplace, and live a quiet but free life alone there, with an attendant. Gradually but surely she would become quite well, but she must be left alone to nature, and she was.

She and Maggie and her maid were once more domesticated in the old manor-house as the spring was waning, and the doctor's prognosis was amply verified.

As she felt the sod of her familiar friends, the Marshes, under her feet, the salt sea wind blowing on her cheeks, and saw Laddie bounding beside her, the past, like a landscape from which grey mists and clouds are slowly lifting, came back to her as vividly as ever.

That dreadful night at Ravenslea! The remembrance made her shudder. Between that and Laddie was a gap.

She had been ill—very ill—with brain fever,

Maggie had told her, and quite off her head, thus accounting for all.

She well remembered the projected meeting with Lord Kingsford, which had never come off, and never would now. What he had to tell of course she would never know now.

The Brands were abroad; Amy Glen was engaged to be married; Violet Hill was shut up, and so was Averil Court.

For her own part she was satisfied to stay in retirement, to have a kind of rest after her strange, eventful life. How many curious things had happened to her within a few years! Enough events to stock the lives of half-a-dozen people.

Yes, there was a repose, a rest in that long summer spent alone at Drydd. She enjoyed it. She had her horse and car, and rode miles and miles over the solitary waste. She had an ample supply of books and magazines and papers daily and weekly despatched from town. She got a new grand piano per rail (the time had been made). She superintended the re-arrangement of the garden, and she felt quite contented and happy.

She was visited by Mrs. Brand—a flying visit—who found that Rosamond was herself again, and who secretly grieved when she thought of the secret she had to divulge to her, sooner or later.

Rosamond refused to leave and go abroad. She was very fond of Drydd, she declared, and would not be at all surprised if she stayed there altogether.

Mrs. Brand smiled to herself a significant smile. She knew better. She knew that before long Drydd would be abandoned for a much grander mansion in a less out-of-the-way part of the world.

And Rosamond, at length, had another visitor—Allan. Emboldened by Lady Germaine's account of her complete recovery, of her long rides and walks, and her renewed interest in everything that was going on, including an inquiry into his whereabouts, he ventured to come to Drydd.

At first he did not come to the house, nor accost her. He saw her riding down lanes or on the marshes, afar off.

He must be very careful how he told her. Her brain must not receive another startling shock. How was he to set about telling her? A dozen times a day he rehearsed the scene to himself, but never to his complete satisfaction.

One evening he was leaning his elbows on the old foot-bridge, staring into the water beneath him, and making up his mind that he would write to her, and humbly ask for an interview, and then trust to chance and opportunity for broaching the subject.

He was getting sick of this long drawn-out suspense of this waiting, waiting, waiting. Fate seemed to take pleasure in throwing obstacle after obstacle in his pathway. What had he done that she should pursue him for the last six years with this kind of relentless malice? Was it, he asked himself, with a grim, sarcastic smile, because he was so ill advised as to marry on a Friday?

It was on this very foot-bridge, more than six years ago, he had asked Rosamond to be his wife. The bridge was the same; the stream danced, and bawled, and bubbled over the stones as it had done then; as if not an hour had elapsed. But they were not the same; they were vastly altered.

He knew that he was harder, more imperious than formerly, less ready to take things as they came, and far less satisfied with life. He was moody, cynical, discontented, he said to himself, frankly, as he leant his elbows on the hand-rail, and gazed abstractedly into the water. And Rosamond, what was she—she was still more changed!

A sudden instinct made him raise his head, and there she was herself—clad in white, with a white parasol over her head, and Laddie by her side—just at the other end of the foot-bridge.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ROSAMOND started, and uttered a slow exclamation of astonishment as she recognised who it was that had been looking into the water. But for once she did not turn and flee. On the contrary, she advanced to meet him, with outstretched hand, and a smile. Yes, could his eyes believe it, a smile, and she was perfectly right in her head now.

"Who would have expected to find you down in this part of the world, Lord Kingsford?" she exclaimed. "How on earth did you discover Drydd Marshes?"

"Without any unreasonable difficulty," taking off his hat as he advanced and took her hand.

"Do you know that I've been thinking of you?" she continued, looking at him gravely; "and wondering where you were, and if you were ever going to tell me, what—what you spoke of at Ravenslea—you remember?"

"Yes, there seemed a fate against it, did there not? You were too ill the next morning, and for a long time afterwards, to be told anything."

"Yes, I believe I was very ill," dreamily. My head was queer, was it not? I remember nothing. Lady Germaine, how good she was to me! I can remember that, at any rate, and never will forget it; nor these awful robbers, shuddering. "That man holding the lamp over my eyes—the man with the knife in his hand. I seem to feel him there sometimes at night still, and I often dream of him," shutting her eyes as she spoke.

"He has got seven years' imprisonment, so I don't fancy you will see him again for some time. You should not let your mind dwell on these horrors, you know."

"It's all very easy to say that," shifting her parasol to her other shoulder; "but you are a man, and don't understand what nerves we have. And now, Lord Kingsford, tell me, to change the subject, what brings you down here?"

At this sudden question Allan was rather taken aback; then, after a moment's silence, he boldly said—

"To see you."

"Why?" was her laconic question.

"To tell you three things, if I may?"

"One is about him, I know," she said, in a low voice.

"It is—Can you bear to hear some great, good news?"

"Bear to hear good news?" ironically. "I am such a stranger to anything of that description that I really cannot answer for myself—with a laugh—" but you may try me."

"Suppose you come over and sit on that big log, under that evergreen oak!" glancing to a seat not far off.

"Supposing I prefer to stand here!" now leaning her elbow on the rail beside him, and looking gravely into his face with beautiful serious eyes. "I shall never sit there again," emphatically.

"It has some reminiscence, then?"

"It has; but never mind that. Go on with your good news, imperiously, and be quick."

"Allan Gordon is alive," he said, with an effort.

"I know that. You said that before," drily. "He loves you as much, nay better, than ever."

"I don't believe it," composedly.

"He has never lost sight of your image in his mind, and has been ever faithful to you in word and thought and deed."

"All these six years!" derisively, "but never sought me. Go on. It is like a tale of the Arabian Nights. Where is he now?"

"You shall know all in good time. In the first place, he is your husband. Disabuse your mind at once of all doubt upon that matter. He has your marriage certificate quite safe. You were as legally married as the Queen herself."

"He is my husband, and he is alive! He is not coming here, is he?" her colour deepening.

"Wait. Have patience and you shall hear."

He went out to Melbourne. He took ship for New Zealand."

"Yes—he did," she acquiesced, breathlessly, "and then—"

"And then he was shipwrecked and cast away on an island for years; a miserable, barren island, bitterly cold, bleak, and exposed, destitute of anything but sea-birds' nests, and out of the track of ships."

"Yes, and after that," excitedly, and coming nearer as she spoke.

"He was rescued. A changed, aged man, he came home and hurried to seek his wife. There was no such person—only Miss Dane still. Such a woman as Mrs. Gordon did not exist."

Rosamond turned and faced him, devouring his features with her eyes—her face as white as her gown.

"Rosamond," he said, in a low voice, "don't you know me?"

"You?" with a stifled shriek. "You are not Allan?" she exclaimed, with lips that quivered so much she could hardly articulate. "Oh, no!" throwing up her hands. "It's—it's impossible."

"Look at me well, and you will see that it's not impossible," he returned, firmly. "Imagine those years adding the lines to my life, the hardships and privations I endured. My cheeks are hollow, my skin sunburnt, my eyes more sunken, my hair touched with grey, and my beard shaved off, and you will soon bring your mind to see that it is not impossible."

"And you are Allan?" She faltered, holding on the hand-rail of the bridge as she spoke.

"I am."

"And—oh! it is all so very strange. I can't believe it. I can't realize it," she said, with her eyes full of tears. How often have I come to this bridge weeping and broken-hearted, and in vain; and after so many years—when I least expect you—when my heart is hardened against you—find you here. What can I say to you, Allan?"

"Say you are glad to see me, Rosamond," rather hurt by her coldness; "that will be enough."

"I am glad! I hope I am glad!" rather wildly; "but I haven't time to think of it, to—believe it yet. I've been imagining such hard things of you, Allan, for so long. I cannot cast them all out of my mind in one second," and with a sudden start, "how do you come to call yourself Lord Kingsford?"

"My cousin Cecil died, and I came in for the title. He was quite a distant relation. No one ever believed that it would fall to a poor, hard-working fellow like Allan Gordon, but it did. And you are Lady Kingsford?"

"Then, Allan, why—I don't understand it all—how it that you have been at home for more than a year—have met me almost daily at times—have never owned me—never discovered yourself. What did it mean, and I saw the likeness. I was impelled to open my mind to you, and yet you never spoke."

"I have told you two things, Rosamond, that I am your husband, and that you are now Lady Kingsford. To explain the third will take some time. I must also explain my seemingly extraordinary conduct, but you will forgive it when you know more, Rosamond," looking at her reproachfully. "I wish—I know you can't help your heart—affection is spontaneous. I wish you were a little more glad to see me."

"It has been—been such a shock," she returned, taking off her hat as she spoke and laying it on the handrail, and passing her hand across her forehead. "I can't believe it yet. I can't think of you as the old Allan Gordon. I can't separate you from Lord Kingsford. How can I realise all at once that I am this strange man's wife? But Allan"—blushing—"you know that I never loved anyone but you, and it will all come back."

"Come back," he echoed. "I don't believe in a love that is allowed to cool, to freeze, to die, ever coming to life again. Oh, Rosie, if you only knew the awful time, the long leaden

years I spent on that island, how the thought of you alone just kept me alive, the frantic determination to live and see you once more! Only for that I'd have been like other poor fellows, who lost heart, worn out by hope deferred, by gnawing hunger, by black despair, that just laid themselves down and died. Sometimes I envied them as I looked on the long mounds—their graves—graves that got thicker as months rolled on; but then I turned my eyes away from death, and clung to life and to days of misery too terrible to paint in words, and fixed my eyes fiercely on the horizon, ever looking for the sail that was to come, Heaven-sent, and take me back to you—Rosamond."

"And all these bitter years you had believed that I had betrayed you. Rosamond, how could you! Deserted you into the bargain. I, who had only lived for the hope of seeing you again, found that my place knew me no more. You hated my memory, repudiated my name, and every feeling you once declared you had for me was long withered and dead. And people talk of woman's constancy," here his voice broke a little, and he turned away abruptly.

This appeal had touched the mute chord in Rosamond's bosom, mute for so long; and with an impulse that carried her out of herself she suddenly threw her arms round his neck and sobbed.

"Allan—Allan! I know it is you now. Thank Heaven for giving you back to me."

For some time she wept so unrestrainedly that she could not speak, but she clung to him in a manner far more eloquent than mere words, and he was satisfied—more than satisfied; and many were the kisses he showered upon her face, her hair, her hands; and a youth wending his way home in the distance stood and gazed open-mouthed, and proceeding on his way told his family circle with deep delight that he had seen a young man on the foot-bridge, near Fox's Folly, a-kissing Miss Dane, and she a-hugging him too, which statement was not received as credible, for everyone knew that Miss Dane did not care for beaux, and there was no pleasing her; she was a very distant and "stand offish" young lady. It was somebody else for sure.

But Bob Druce still held valiantly to his own opinion. If it were not her it was as like as two peas—in a white dress—she wore white. What other young lady ever came that way, he would like to know, and, anyway, her dog was there. He saw him sitting on the foot-bridge as large as life.

This last argument was a clincher, and the benighted, incredulous audience began to pick up their ears and wonder, and remember vague half-forgotten old stories of how Miss Dane, when she was quite a young slip of a girl, used to meet a young gentleman on the Marshes years ago, and unknown to her grandmother or anyone. Yes, she had been seen. They now cast their minds back and recollected it well. There had been whispers—strange rumours—and maybe this was the man, come back after all!

There was a great deal of talk and of speculation round the Druce's supper-table that night, but none of their surmises came near the truth.

(To be continued.)

THE most ancient stock of royalty is that of the Mikado. The Chinese, it is true, claim that their history begins about 3,000 years n.c., but this must be taken with considerable salt. Against the 5,000 years or more of the Chinese, the Japanese place only 2,544. They date their calendar from the ascension of Jimmu Tenno, which took place April 7th, 660 n.c. This assertion may also be subject to dispute of historians, but the fact remains undisputed that while China has had 23 dynasties, Japan has had but one. There has been but one long unbroken chain of monarchs, the longest, oldest dynasty in the world, in comparison with which the Guelphs, and Hapsburgs, and Romanoffs are but of yesterday.

THE POWER OF SONG.

The songs we learn in childhood,
Though simple they may be,
Whate'er our lot in after years,
Will haunt the memory.
We cannot, if we would forget
The melodies we knew
When life was young, and eyes were bright,
And hearts were warm and true.

The Irishman, while satisfied
With his adopted land,
And toiling hard from day to day
With pick or spade in hand,
Will feel his bosom thrill with joy,
And be a boy again,
When listening to the music of
"The wearing of the Green."

The Scotchman from "the land o' cakes,"
Though steeped in want and care,
And struggling on right manfully
To earn his daily fare,
Forgets his trouble and his toil,
And wears a look benign,
When on his hearing sweetly breaks
The air of "Auld Lang Syne."

The anthem of old England
Will stir the Briton's heart,
The Frenchman at the Marseillaise
With ecstacy will start,
The stolid German thrills with joy
To hear "Die Wacht am Rhein"—
Each as he listens breathes this thought:
"That melody is mine."

And 'tis not only so with songs
That speak a nation's praise,
But with each simple melody
We learned in early days.
They came to us like dear old friends
When care-worn and downcast,
And like a gold chain sweetly link
The present with the past.

F. S. S.

A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

CHAPTER IV.

"AND NOW, gentlemen—*Pax Vobiscum!* as the donkey said to the cabbages."

"Miss Celia, here's Miss Barlow come to see you," says Prudence, poking her frilled cap into the little room adjoining father's library, which is especially my own *sanctum sanctorum*, and where, this summer afternoon, I lie curled up on the deep oak window-seat, busily engaged in rubbing some coins bright for father to decipher some old inscription on them.

"Oh! I am glad, Prue! I'll come directly," I exclaim with alacrity, putting the coins back in their box until another leisure moment, and getting off the window-seat.

Miss Hannah Barlow is the dearest and sweetest old lady anyone could desire to meet in a long day's march. There is nothing whatever of "crabbed age" about her many years. Her hair, silver-white, powdered by time herself, she wears in little short curls under her lace cap, and a muslin kerchief always encircles her neck, making her look like some pretty old picture of ages ago. When you hear her pleasant, chiming voice—never sour, never bitter, always kindly—you feel that she means everything she says. No honeyed phrases uttered for the nonce.

Her brother, the Reverend Stephen Barlow, is rector of East Marling, whose house she keeps, for he is a bachelor. He is many years Miss Hannah's junior, and she treats him even now like a big boy more than a man of years—settling everything for him as she would have done had he still been in the nursery.

Rumour—whose tongue is always busy—has it, with what truth I cannot say, being thus too young to judge myself, that when Ann

Rachel first came to Gable End she tried her fascinations on Stephen Barlow. Whether aunt found him obdurate, or whether Miss Hannah stepped in and turned the shafts of winged love aside, I know not. This I do know, that there is no love lost between aunt and Miss Hannah. It is a thrust and parry between them when they meet, for Miss Hannah's clear sense can pierce through aunt's machinations. Outwardly, they are courteous to a degree. Miss Hannah could not hurt a fly; aunt would not from policy—therein lies all the difference.

Stephen Barlow is one of those kind-hearted, gentle-souled clerics, who would fall easily enough into any matrimonial snare set for them, and, once in, make no effort to get out again. He is, however, I honestly believe, completely contented to be managed by his sister, and desires no other housekeeper, and nothing in the shape of a wife, for the remaining term of his natural life.

I think aunt quite recognizes the hopelessness of her ever becoming rectress of East Marling, and guardian angel of the village. I believe she attributes primary failure to Miss Hannah, and bears her a grudge inwardly. A cat always sheathes its claws.

For more than a week past I have seen nothing of the Barlows, for they have been away, staying in Gloucestershire with some old friends, so Miss Hannah told me when she came to bid me good-bye before they left Marling.

I suppose that Mr. Barlow, having taken his clergyman's week, has returned home for to-morrow's duty, which accounts for the appearance of Miss Hannah, whom I am always unfeignedly glad to see. I can talk to her as if she were of my own age, feeling nothing incongruous in my confessions; confiding my small woes—of which, truth to tell, I have never had many—into her dear old sympathetic ear, and feel the happier for my unburdening. So I cry, very joyfully, as I enter the Gable End drawing-room—

"I am pleased to see you, dear Miss Hannah! How good of you to walk over all this way on a hot afternoon. You must be quite baked. But I am glad you have come."

"Thank you, dear Celia!" she returns rising to greet me, and kissing me on each cheek, French fashion. "And now"—seating herself on an old-fashioned chintz-covered ottoman, and pulling me beside her—"Sit down here, and tell me all about this morning. I want to hear the whole story from the beginning."

"Tell you about this morning!" I echo, thinking it impossible she can refer to my comedy, for how could she know anything about it!

"Yes!" she goes on, patting my hand lying in hers; "a little bird told me all about it, or, rather, I ought to say a big bird gave me such a garbled account of something or other that happened this morning by the river that I have come to you to hear the meaning of it all."

"Oh!" I rejoin, a dawning smile on my lips; "I suppose you mean the fisherman and the water-cross gatherer. How did you know?"

"Because Mr. Boughton told me, dear. I must tell you, Stephen and I came home from Gloucestershire the night before last, and brought Colin Boughton with us. His father was an old college friend of Stephen's that he had not met for many years, and staying with his son in the same house. My brother and I took such a fancy to him that we asked him to come back with us for a week or two for some fishing, of which he is very fond. I had intended bringing him over to call yesterday afternoon, but was prevented at the last moment. Just at lunch time he came in to me in the greatest agitation of mind, giving me, as I tell you, a garbled account, of which I could neither make head or tail. At last he mentioned the name of Celia, and it struck me at once that he might mean yourself."

"Yes!" I put in laughing; "it was me, self, and no one else."

"Questioning him further, and making him

describe this damsel he spoke of,—and I must tell you he gave quite a flattering description of you, mademoiselle—I knew at once it must be my Celia Lascelles: and I told him what old friends we were, and that it would be all right. But that seemed to frighten him quite; he said that really he was immensely sorry to leave us, but he must go. Nothing I could say would make him alter his determination, he'd made such a fool of himself; and the bare idea of meeting or seeing you again seemed to fill him with dismay."

"Poor me. What a Gorgon I must be, Miss Hannah, mustn't I? Perhaps, he'll alter his mind about going by the time you get back."

"My dear child, I left him in the act of packing up his things, preparatory to a fitting either this evening, or the first thing to-morrow morning. I am sure he really means to go."

"I am terribly sorry"—wrinkling up my brows in a favourite fashion of my own—"that is, I am sorry if it is my fault: what can I do?"

"Well, dear, I want you to come back with me to the Rectory, and try your persuasive powers to make matters straight. I am sure he'll stay if you ask him"—smiling slyly at me—"besides I think as you are the objective cause of his departure, you are the best person to beg him to remain. What say you?" turning her dear old face to mine.

"By all means, Miss Hannah," I acquiesce, blithely; "of course, I'll come if you wish me to. Am I not always ready and willing to do anything in the world for you? You don't ever ask me to do half enough."

At this juncture in floats in Aunt Rachel,—softly, purringly, gracefully.

"How do you do, Miss Barlow? I am charmed to see you, Celia sweetest! why did you not call me directly Miss Barlow came?" with a glance at me.

"I had no idea you were here," she goes on, addressing Miss Hannah, "otherwise I should have come at once. Prudence happened to mention that you were in the drawing-room, when I was in the store-room just now, otherwise I should not have known it at all."

Aunt speaks as if seeing Miss Hannah was the one end and aim of her whole existence.

"Perhaps I am the most to blame, Mrs. Lascelles," returns her chiming voice, "for I confess to having asked for Celia. I thought you might be busy and not care to be bothered with visitors."

"Do not say that, Miss Barlow," purrs Aunt smoothly, "you know how welcome you always are at Gable End."

"As much as you are at the Rectory," says Miss Hannah, smiling, knowing that aunt detests the sight of her, "but I really came to carry off Celia for the afternoon and evening."

"She will be too delighted, I am sure. Will you not tell Celia, precious?" unctuously.

"I want to introduce her to a young friend of mine who is staying with us. We brought him back from Gloucestershire with us the night before last," looking at me.

"Oh! a gentleman?" inquires Aunt, a trifle less sweetly.

"Yes, the son of an old college friend of Mr. Barlow's, a Mr. Colin Boughton."

"Indeed!" as if waiting for further information.

"He is such a nice young fellow. So genial and pleasant. I am certain he and Celia will get on capitally together."

"No doubt," a trifle coldly from Aunt.

She has an unwarrantable dislike to anything in the shape of a young man. I suppose she thinks they might or might not be a spoke in Michael's wheel. Anyway, when any of that kind appear at Gable End, they are made to feel *de trop* in a smoothly polite way.

"The Boughtons are a very good old family, but no money, unfortunately for them. However, birth and breeding count for something, even in this money-loving age. Nineteenth century money won't make a real true-hearted gentleman, and Colin is certainly that," ends Miss Hannah, warmly.

"Possibly," returns Aunt, chilly, "no having the pleasure of Mr. Boughton's acquaintance, I am not in a position to judge of his merits or demerits. No doubt he is all and everything you say. By-the-by, Celia, precious, I quite forgot when Miss Barlow asked you to spend the afternoon with her, that I expect Lady Vacher to call. I should be sorry for her to find you out when she came, and she might consider it rude, and that you were out on purpose," very purringly, as if suddenly recollecting something she had hitherto forgotten. "I daresay Miss Barlow will allow you to come some other day instead, and I have tea with her."

By this speech I recognised at once that aunt is averse to my going to the Rectory, but will not openly say so. She loveth the crooked way better far than the straight one.

"You needn't be at all alarmed on that score," puts in Miss Hannah, quickly. "I know Lady Vacher will not call at Gable End this afternoon, because an hour back I left her in bed with one of her bad neuralgic attacks, where she intends remaining."

"Dear me, I am sorry to hear that. I know she suffers very much with neuralgia," returns Aunt, sweetly. "Then, of course, Celia darling, I have nothing to say against your going if you wish to."

"You need not trouble to send for her. I will see she comes home safely. Stephen shall bring her back, if that is all. She will be quite safe," emphasises Miss Hannah, which is a tiny thrust back at aunt for trying to prevent my going."

"Thank you very much indeed, Miss Barlow," answers Aunt stately, feeling her defeat.

"I have no doubt of Celia's safety, otherwise, of course, I could not think of letting her come; but I always feel myself morally responsible to my dear brother-in-law for his child's welfare, and you, therefore, must allow me to send my son Michael for her."

I know by aunt's extra purr that she would dearly like to unsheth those velvet paws of hers, and give Miss Hannah a good scratch; however, she says in her most amiable tone,—

"You had better go at once and put on your things, sweetest; and not keep Miss Barlow waiting for you."

As I go out of the door I hear her softly inquiring after Mr. Barlow's health, and Miss Hannah's dulcet tones informing her that her brother was never better in his life, much better than if he had a wife to worry him.

In another quarter of an hour Miss Hannah and I are trotting down the Marling road arm-in-arm. It is almost a two-mile walk to the rectory, but a very pleasant one. By the scented meadows and hedgerows, through Marling wood, where the hazel trees are blossoming, and wild honeysuckle makes the air rich and sweet with perfume, until we at last come in sight of the long, low-built, rambling, two-storied house, in which Stephen Barlow lives gratis and rent free, by permission of a large-hearted, liberal government.

The green-painted, five-barred swing gate stands open for us, and as we pass down the smooth gravel walk towards the house I begin to experience a faint, quavery feeling at heart.

Supposing, oh! supposing, after all, brown eyes should be disagreeable, and flatly decline to have anything to say to erring me. Imagine if he says, "No, I've been made a fool of once I'll take precious good care you don't get the opportunity again; was I really to blame? Perhaps so. At any rate, however he may receive me, whatever he may say or do, I must make the best of it."

"Miss Hannah, does Mr. Boughton know that you are going to bring me back?" I hazard, as we get nearer and nearer the house.

"He doesn't even know I went to fetch you, dear," she answers, glibly. "I even doubt if he knew I was out at all. I thought, under the circumstances, it would be better to give him a surprise."

"I suppose you thought if you told him your

errand beforehand he might run away at once to avoid me," I say, laughing rudely, for no one cares to be a bugbear. "Poor harmless Celia! I never imagined any man would think it worth while to run away from such a country mouse as I am. Hadn't you better prepare him for my appearance, dear Miss Hannah?" feeling a half-hearted desire to shirk the meeting at the last moment. "I can wait in the drawing-room until you call me."

"No, it's part of my little plan that you should take him by surprise. You see—jokingly—"he can't run away then. Besides, I do not think after the first five minutes he will want to—nodding her silver white head sagaciously—"now, we must find out where he is first. I expect somewhere in the garden—he's generally to be found thereabouts—or the garden-orchard, where the swallows are. We'll take a peep there to begin with," pushing open a lattice door leading into a walled-off portion of the rectory garden, christened the garden-orchard by reason of its apple, pear, and plum trees in all their wealth of fruit.

She passes through that, I metely following her, my heart in my boots. All my vaunted valour evaporated, like water in the sun.

Sitting in the swing, which is hung by big chains from a splendid old walnut tree, his feet resting on the ground, smoking the inevitable cigarette, is the fisherman, looking as if he was in a day-dream; probably about his fish.

"Ah! Celia, so here you are!" cries Miss Hannah, trotting up to him, and talking quickly. "I have brought a very dear little friend of mine to be introduced to you—Miss Celia Lascelles. Now, I want you to be very good friends, and amuse each other for a few minutes while I go in, take off my walking things, and tell Sarah to bring the tea out here. I think it will be pleasant out here than indoors," and away she trots again to the house.

He had started to his feet the instant he heard Miss Hannah's voice saying, "Ah, Celia, so here you are!" then catching sight of me just behind her, a dark red flush burnt his face as Miss Hannah, going on to introduce me, he threw away his cigarette and bowed.

We now stand stock still, staring at each other, not a single syllable between us. I am not garbed in an old cotton dress and sun-bonnet this afternoon, but he knows me again perfectly. Is he waiting for me to speak first, or am I waiting for him?

Then suddenly my heart rises from my boots. Somehow those brown eyes cannot be so very terrible. I move forward two steps, hold out my hand, look up with an apologetic smile at his face and say—

"Forgive me, I am very sorry."

Then—and mind you only then—his very dignified air and manner relaxes. Once more he becomes the genial, kindly spoken brown eyes of the riverside. He smiles and takes my proffered hand, and gives it a warm shake.

"So am I," he returns, heartily, "very sorry indeed that I was such an idiot as to mistake you for a village Philistine. I can't think how I could have been so egregiously blind and stupid," looking at me from head to foot.

"What must you have thought of me?"

"It was all my fault," I return, magnanimously. "I can quite understand your mistake, my right well-master, with a return to the Norfolk lingo just for fun, at which we both laugh heartily, while I draw a basket chair to me, and he reseats himself in the swing.

"It was horribly idiotic of me though. Fancy my daring to talk to you with—H! little girl!" You need perceived something feminine in the distance?

"With an awful old gown and sun-bonnet on?" I interrupt, gleefully.

"And I was so wrapt up in the loss of that wretched bait that I didn't take the trouble to look what kind of feminine it was. Then when I did at last, as I thought, make your acquaintance, you answered me in that fearful lingo;

so I do really think I deserve a little pity for my mistake, stupid as it undoubtedly was."

"It was the lingo that did it. I could not resist the temptation."

"Don't you confess it was very cruel of you to hoax me like that? Want a capital actress you would make? You were the country girl to the very life!"

"So I am a country girl, Mr. Boughton. I certainly did not act a part there."

"And that bob cursey when I gave you that miserable, humiliating expense. It was inimitable. I don't believe I've seen anything better on the stage than that."

"You must not after my acting so much; or I shall begin to think seriously of taking to the boards for a livelihood," I say, laughing. "But concerning that same expense, I wonder you don't have me taken up for obtaining money under false pretences."

"That would be a finishing stroke to the whole business, wouldn't it? I've half a mind to follow your good advice, and hand you over to the local bobby for confinement in the village distance vile, thanks, if Marling possesses such accommodation for the wholesale criminal."

"Seriously, though, Mr. Boughton, let me restore the expense to its rightful owner, now I am about it. I shall not be completely happy in my mind until I know it's safely back in your pocket. Indeed, I brought it with me for this very purpose," taking it out of my pocket and tendering it to him. "Please take it."

He waves it off.

"Horrible little coin!" he exclaims, with gusto; "primary cause of my undoing. Don't let me see its hideous little face, I implore you, Miss Lascelles. The sight of that sixpence gives me a cold shiver down my spinal marrow. Give it to the first bonny little villager you meet going home. Besides, all things considered, it isn't my property, veritably speaking. A labourer is worthy of his hire, and you know you can't deny that you fairly earned it," and the brown eyes gaze wickedly, mirthful at me.

"I never deny the truth, and as it is most certainly the first and only money I have ever earned in my useless life, I'll keep it as a constant reminder that I can work when I choose."

"If you really and truly wish to earn your own living, Miss Lascelles, I am prepared to engage you upon the same terms until further notice," he urges, somewhat eagerly.

"To be honest it was Peter, our gardener's boy, who earned the sixpence, for he dug this bait. I nearly threw the tin away several times on my way back to you; the worms wriggled so fearfully, and looked so horrid. I had more than half a mind, too, not to return at all," I add, as an afterthought.

"I'm intensely glad you did," he exclaims, heartily, evidently quite forgetful of his late discomfiture. "Imagine me, an eager fisherman, expectant of those same worms, waiting for the bait that never came; imagine those little perch, of which I afterwards caught three, waiting in vain for their succulent little bait. Now I am very glad, indeed, you did come back."

"In my heart of hearts, I think I am very glad, too, but I do not alter my thoughts aloud. So we chit-chat, and thus, when Miss Hannah presently appears, with her garden hat on, followed by Sarah with the tea, she finds us the very best of friends.

She makes no comment of any kind, however, on our reconciliation; I might almost call it, nor asks us how we have amused ourselves during her absence; only smooths my cheeks with her hand, for I have devoted my head of the Sunday hat, which I donned in lieu of the fatal sun-bonnet, and says, pleasantly—

"Did you think I and Sarah were never coming with the tea? Old Mrs. Hubbard, the clerk's wife at Roundham, came in to get some flannel for her rheumatism, and kept me talking with her some time. After tea you must get Celia to give you a swing. Celia, address swinging," turning to him.

"Do you?" looking at me.

"Yes; am I not a big baby? It is perfectly delicious to feel oneself going through the air, touching the leaves."

"I shall be delighted to swing you as much and as often as you like, Miss Lascelles. I've a good deal of muscle which requires developing, and I should imagine swinging was as good as dumb bells, and better fun. I'll swing you all the day long, if you wish."

I mentally comment that this offer does not chime in exactly with his determination to leave the Rectory to-morrow. In fact, I believe he's forgotten all about that; however, I hold my peace, and answer, soberly—

"Thanks very much, Mr. Boughton; but I won't make a martyr of you to that extent. It would be cruelty to animals; the society would have me up."

"I'm quite content to be an animal," he returns, with a glance from those very brown eyes; "a beast of burden, and I don't think you will work me too hard."

"No, you may trust me so far," I answer, looking at Sarah bringing the old Queen Anne silver teapot, which is one of Miss Hannah's special treasures.

Mr. Barlow joins us, and we place ourselves round the impromptu tea-table.

"Let me cut the bread-and-butter, Miss Hannah," I say, gaily, take up a knife and the home-baked brown loaf. "Father always says I cut thin bread-and-butter better than any one at Gable End."

"Do, dear," she returns, creaming in half, for the yellow cream is so thick it has to be ladled out with a little spoon.

"By all means let us have a specimen of your prowess in the art of thin bread-and-butter cutting; and I'll help the honeycomb, not to be idle. You remind me of that little poem about Werter's Charlotte. Do you remember it?"

"Yes, you mean—"stopping short, knife in one hand, and quivering—

Werter had a love for Charlotte, such as one could never utter.

Would you know how first he met her? She was eating bread-and-butter,

which does not exactly apply in this case, does it?"

"Why not?" he remarks innocently, glancing at Mr. Barlow's wedge of golden honeycomb.

"Because we happen to have met below I argue mildly, going on with my cutting.

"Ah, yes, well, perhaps so. Let me see, though, the finale of the poem was most harrowing, wasn't it? How does it run?

"So he sighed and pined, and longed, and his passion boiled and bubbled,

Till he blew his silly brains out, and was none by it troubled."

Am I right Miss Lascelles?" taking liberty from Miss Hannah.

"Quite right. But you've not quoted all of it," I respond, laughingly.

"Charlotte, when she saw his body, born to her on a shunter.

Like a well-conducted person, went on eating bread-and-butter."

and I flourished my knife.

"I wonder if you would be like cruel Charlotte?" he questions, helping himself to a slice doubled over. "Supposing you were to see my hapless corpse carried out of this gate, would you go on calmly spreading the butter and serving wafers of slices of brown bread?" melodramatically.

"I can't say what I should do. But in circumstances are all so different, that there is no parallel to be drawn that I can see. Dear Miss Hannah?" appealing to her.

"Not at present, dear, certainly, no rejoins, pouring out Mrs. Barlow's second cup of tea, "but I should not think there would be any necessity for Celia to blow the brains out like poor Werter's lover. Werter, I think Charlotte must have been a very hard-hearted girl to behave as she did. I don't believe my little Celia could follow such a cruel example."

"Well-spoken, Miss Hannah!" chimed in Mr. Boughton approvingly. "Miss Lascelles, another slice of that wafery brown bread, and butter, please. I never thought I was so fond of bread and butter before."

"The stuff of life," mildly puts in Mr. Barlow, beginning his third cup of tea. "Hannah, my dear, talking of bread, remember that David Hoare has three loaves instead of two next Saturday, will you? And Jane Moxon is to come every morning for half-a-pint of milk for her grandmother's gruel."

Miss Hannah registers it in her memory, and with this our discussion anent Wester and Charlotte comes to a finale, together with the tea.

How pleasant it all is. How luscious and sweet the honeycombed—how nice the home-baked bread and freshly-churned butter!—how refreshing the tea, eaten and drunk at fresco under the shade of the old walnut tree! Never surely was time so happy.

Then we all stroll round the garden, smell the lavender, look at the ripening fruit, wander from the orchard to the pond, where broods of yellow, fluffy ducklings disport themselves on the placid surface; back again to the garden orchard, where I have my swing, and go over so much higher than ever Michael sends me, to my intense delight.

Early comes gentle gloaming, and supper in the Rectory dining-room, after which Mr. Boughton and I play spellikins, while Miss Hannah watches our game, knitting swiftly socks for brother Stephen. We all scream merrily over the whistles, and mistakes in our arithmetic on counting up, and generally enjoy ourselves. At least I know I do thoroughly, which is perhaps one advantage of being of a babyish turn of mind.

Finally Michael appears, like the warring ghost in *Hamlet*, to take me home by the light of the moon. Mr. Boughton thinks he'll come too, and Miss Hannah says it's such a lovely night they will all come part of the way with him, which I am only too glad of; and do not feel inclined for a long tete-a-tete with Michael.

We tramp down the Marling road, which now lies in deep shadow, and again in the flood of silver moonbeams. Michael stalks on one side of me, Miss Hannah next him, Mr. Barlow beyond, and Colin Boughton on the other side of me. Michael has the air of a gendarme marshalling his prisoners along to the Bastille.

Since his introduction to Mr. Boughton at the Rectory he has barely acknowledged his presence, save for an occasional yes and no to questions addressed to him, necessitating an answer of some kind.

Once or twice I have noticed the brown eyes attentively regarding my cousin, with the faintest smile of amusement at his want of friendliness. A smile, however, which, as Michael keeps his face straight before him, when not turned in Miss Hannah's direction, he is not conscious of.

When we emerge from Marling Wood, and reach the first Gable End meadow the Barlows and Mr. Boughton wish us good-night.

Miss Hannah and Mr. Barlow are arranging some choir question with Michael, who marshals them on Sunday, as Colin Boughton and I shake hands last of all.

"Goodnight, Miss Collie," he says, lowering, holding my hand for a second longer than is absolutely necessary in his. "Is that *Lehman*?" he asks, in an undertone, looking down straight into my face.

"Lehman?" I echoed after him, then I added quickly, "why do you want to know?"

"Natural curiosity, I suppose. I am right, then?" releasing my hand.

"I'm sure I don't know," I return, wrinkling my brow, which is hardly the truth, because I do know very well, only I don't see why I should say so. "Why should it be *Lehman*?"

I demand again, not exactly satisfied in my own mind that his first question was one that I quite appreciate.

"In Acadia every Phyllis has her Damon, every Chloe her Stephen, every village Phoebe her Lubin. Good-night, Miss Lascelles," in a louder tone, and Michael looms black on us in the moonbeams, throwing his shadow right between us two.

Long after we have separated, they going their way, Michael and I, I hear dear Miss Hannah's ringing voice through the summer night, and Colin Boughton's gruff man's tones in response.

Mr. Barlow I do not hear, but that is not remarkable. He seldom is heard except in the pulpit, and there he is impressive enough. I give a little sigh to myself for somehow they seem to take away all the sweetness and brightness of the summer night with them.

"I have had such a pleasant time, Michael," I say aloud, the next moment.

"Indeed, Collie. I am very glad to hear it," he answers, not manifesting any particular gladness of voice though.

"Mr. Boughton is such a splendid wingler," I go on, cheerfully, brightening up at the recollection. "I went over so high—much higher than you ever send me."

"Perhaps Mr. Boughton does not particularly care whether you fall out of the swing and break your neck. I, on the contrary, do care," he replies, coldly.

"Well, he may not care, as you say; but he is very nice, all the same," I put in, irritably, knowing that my cousin won't appreciate it—"very nice, indeed, and I like him," emphatically.

But Michael won't pick up the glove thrown down as a sign of defiance, and remains sternly silent. I wait about two minutes, then, as if communing with the night and entrusting my thoughts to its moonlit carry, I repeat once more—

"Yes, very nice!"

So saying we reach Gable End gate.

(To be continued.)

If, in instructing a child, you are vexed with it for a want of docility, try, if you have never tried before, to write with your left hand, and then remember that a child is all left hand!

All people have not learned the art of leaving a room in an appropriate manner. When you are ready to depart, do so at once, gracefully and politely, and with no dallying. Don't say, "It is about time I was going," and settle back and talk on aimlessly for another ten minutes. Some people have just such a time-some habit. They will even rise and stand about the room in various attitudes, keeping their host standing, and then by an effort succeed in getting, as far as the hall, when a new thought strikes them. They then brighten up visibly, and stand for some minutes longer, saying nothing of importance, but keeping everybody in a restless, nervous state. After the door is opened the prolonged leave-taking begins, and everybody, in general, and in particular is invited to call. Very likely a last thought strikes the departing visitor, which his friend must take a cold to hear at the end. What a relief when the door is finally closed! There is no need of being offensively abrupt; but when you are ready to go—go!

A WATER-CURTAIN has been established at the Grand Theatre, Munich, to guard against fire. It consists of a wide thin stream continuously poured from the top of the stage, between the acts, completely enclosing the stage in a transparent curtain, and it was owing to this precaution that a recent fire which broke out during the performance of *Tannhäuser* was checked immediately. The Vienna Opera has been fitted with a similar apparatus, as the Viennese authorities, taught by sad experience, are just now most vigilant in these matters, and have appointed a Special Commission to superintend all the Austrian theatres. This commission decrees that in future every house of entertainment is to be entirely detached on all four sides, and to be fifty feet from any other building.

CAUGHT IN HER OWN TRAP.

—O—

When Esther Ryle went home from school for the summer holidays she took with her for a visit little Dora Lind.

There was not a girl at Madame Montolieu's that year who would not gladly have changed places with Dora; such was the reputation of Rylewood as a splendid and beautiful residence—a charming place to visit.

Esther Ryle was an heiress, being the only child of a rich widower who, report said, was not likely to marry again, having lived without delay for fifteen years.

It was the prettiest sight in the world to see her running about in her white dress, with its blue ribbon, and her curls flying, and her arms full of flowers, as they morning were.

Ernest Ryle even used to look up from his books as her sweet laugh echoed to the library where he sat, and often he would get up and go where he could catch a glimpse of the sweet, bright face, and see himself in its radiance.

There was only one person at Rylewood who did not like Dora. That was Miss Vidal, the sister of Ernest Ryle's dead wife. She had come there first to superintend Esther, who was very young when her mother died, and had remained ever since.

The one worry of Miss Vidal's life was lost her brother-in-law should marry again.

Esther had often entreated to be allowed to bring some of the girls home with her, but her aunt had always vetoed any such proposition till now when she did not have the chance, Esther, thinking, perhaps, that for once she would do as she liked without asking any one.

Angry as Miss Vidal was at her bringing Dora home with her, she did not dare to show it openly, and the young girl was as unconscious of her disapproval as a flower would have been.

At first Dora was a little afraid of her friend's father, but as she soon discovered that what she had taken for gloom and sternness was only sadness and silence, and when she found that he did not object, but seemed rather to like to have Esther and her home and sit in the library when he was there, the two went often.

Esther was very fond of her father, and Dora ceased to wonder at it, and she grew to know better the handsome, gentle, kind face that smiled at them across his books.

"Why don't you send those children away?" asked Miss Vidal, hearing them laugh, and coming to the door to see the girls, like children, indeed, both down on the carpet with a litter of flowers and ferns between them.

"Because I like to have them here," returned Mr. Ryle, without lifting his eyes from his book.

The spinster went her way frowning, and after that very little went on in the library that she did not know of.

One Mr. Ryle asked Dora for a flower, and she gave it to him wondering. But from that time he was always asking for flowers, and then got her to pin them in his coat for him, and while she did so he watched the little bright, anxious face, as it turned bird-fashion first this way then that, to note the effect, till he could resist the temptation no longer, and nodding it between his hands suddenly kissed it as tenderly and reverently as he would have done his own child's.

This was too much for Miss Vidal. "For shame, Ernest Ryle!" she exclaimed, coming forward from the next room. "Do you know what notions you are putting into that child's head?"

Mr. Ryle blushed like a girl at the sound of his sister-in-law's voice; but he looked up with a smile, while Dora stood dripping and trembling, not knowing whether to laugh or cry, and not daring to lift her eyes.

"What notions?" he asked gaily.
 "She'll be fancying you are in love with her, next," said Miss Vidal, curtly.

Ernest Ryle looked startled a moment, then in a careless voice,—

"Where would be the harm if she did?" he questioned, "especially if it were not a fancy, but the truth."

The spinster fairly gasped.

"You—you can't mean it; you never would so insult my sister's memory as to put that child in her place?" she cried. "I thought you were never going to marry again."

"I don't know why you should think anything about it," said Mr. Ryle, and added, very sternly for him: "We will change the subject, if you please, Louise."

Dora had by this time slipped away through the open glass door into the garden; and as his sister-in-law, with her head carried very lofty, swept from the room, he followed Dora.

But the child had already vanished. He could see Esther swinging among the trees on the river-bank, but Dora was nowhere in sight.

He kept out of his daughter's view, and went along looking down to the various paths, till in one of the most secluded he got a glimpse of something white at the farthest extremity, where there was an arbour nearly covered with flowering vines. Stepping quickly and lightly to the spot, he found, as he had expected Dora, down in a heap beside one of the benches, and sobbing as if her heart would break. She was crying so hard that she did not hear him or know he was there, till he stooped, and gently lifting her, made her sit beside him.

"Dora, my sweet child," he said, stroking her sunny hair with his hand, "are you crying because of what Miss Vidal said?"

"N-no," she sobbed, at last.

"Is it because I kissed you then?" and he tried to lift her face so he could see it, but she hid it all the more obstinately against his coat.

"My little darling," he said, "will you come and live in my home always? Will you be my little child-wife, Dora? Do you love me enough?"

The sweet young face lifted suddenly, the wondering eyes flashed out at him like violets shining with dew.

"You don't mean it, really?" she questioned. "Such a silly little thing as I am?"

"Yes, I do, I don't think you're silly. Do you think you could be happy here always with me?"

"Yes," she whispered, softly, "I know I could."

"Will you stay then, as my little wife?"

"What, now? I think I am too young."

"You are seventeen?"

"Yes."

"A great many girls are married as young as that. Shall it be? If you consent, put your hands in mine."

A moment, and like two little white birds, the soft hands fluttered into his.

A few minutes afterwards he led her out of the summer-house to where Esther was, and told her what had happened. Esther could scarcely comprehend it, but she was delighted.

"I do wonder what Aunt Louise will say?" she said.

Dora was just a little bit afraid of Miss Vidal, and she looked frightened, but the others laughed so, that she got over it again.

She was not with Mr. Ryle when the important communication was made to Miss Vidal; but that lady having barely contained herself before him, went straight to Dora's chamber, where she had gone to dress for dinner.

The spinster entered without knocking, and going close to Dora as she sat before the glass brushing her hair, she stood looking at her with two furies in her eyes.

"Dora Lind," she hissed. "I'll make you sorry for this day's work yet. I'll make you wish you had never seen Rylewood or its master. I want to live just long enough to make you wish you had never been born."

Then she flew out of the room, leaving a strange little white figure in the chair, and no wonder—Dora had fainted away.

When she came to herself they were all about her. Miss Vidal foremost of all, and as soon as she could get a chance, where the rest could not hear, she begged Dora to forgive her for being in such a temper about what was none of her business, and please not tell Mr. Ryle what she had said to her, and have her sent away from Rylewood, because she had nowhere else to go.

The tender, soft-hearted child was ready enough to promise. She never could bear to hurt anything, and she was only too glad to be friends with everybody. She was too simple, minded and loving to distrust Miss Vidal's smooth words.

The fainting was attributed to the heat, to excitement, to anything but the true cause.

The marriage came off very quietly and very soon, and Esther Ryle went back to Madame Montelien's alone, leaving them very happy.

Dora would have been perfectly so, but for one thing.

She was still a little afraid of Miss Vidal, and though she apparently had all heart could wish for, she drooped. She began really to look ill, and Ernest Ryle, quick to be anxious about his darling, summoned a doctor, who advised a change of air; and a sojourn at the seaside was accordingly decided upon.

By an unforeseen circumstance it chanced, at the last moment, that Ernest Ryle could not go with his wife. But he promised to join her soon, and as Miss Vidal was to remain behind, Dora found some consolation for her husband's detention.

Esther and her maid were with her, and she brightened as soon as they started. She was like a bird out of a cage from the time they left Rylewood.

They found the "cottage by the sea" everything that was desirable, and took possession in high glee. Dora was like a frolicsome child.

Towards nightfall she and Esther went out for a walk on the sands. A train had just come in at the little station half-a-mile away, and Esther was just saying how nice it would be if papa were in it, when Dora uttered a cry of dismay.

There, just coming into view, was Miss Vidal.

"I hate her," she said, childishly. "I thought I had got away from her at last. There, I didn't mean to say that," she added, apologetically, to Esther.

"You don't hate her any worse than I do, if she is my aunt," said her friend. "If I were you, Dora, I'd have it out with her now, and tell her to go back where she came from. We don't want her here."

"I wish I dare," said Dora.

Miss Vidal pretended not to see them, and went on to the house, where they found her perfectly at home on their arrival.

"I thought you were not coming, Aunt Louise," said Esther.

"So did I, child, but your dear papa was so anxious about his Dora that he sent me on after all to help take care of her."

The old maid shot one of her spiteful glances at Dora as she spoke.

"I don't need any care," said the young wife, mustering resolution, "and I sincerely wish you would go back to Rylewood by the next train, Miss Vidal."

"There won't be another till to-morrow, anyway," said Miss Vidal coolly, "and I couldn't think of leaving you till your husband comes. Besides, if all is true that I hear, you'll be glad enough of my company till you can get better in the house."

"What have you heard?" asked Esther.

"I have heard," said the spinster, watching Dora, furtively, "that this house is haunted by the ghost of a poor old woman, who was murdered here, but I never was afraid of ghosts myself."

Dora had never moved while Miss Vidal was

speaking. Her face was very white, her childish lips were quivering as she said, piteously,—

"I am, and you know it, Miss Vidal; and you recommended this very cottage to Ernest, when we first talked of coming to the seaside. You must have known all about it then, for you have not had time to hear so much since you came."

With that she turned to go towards Esther, but fell fainting on the floor.

That night, when the house was quiet and everyone else seemed to have retired, a strange scene was being enacted in Miss Vidal's chamber.

The spinster, clothed all in white, and with her face powdered thickly till it looked like a dead woman's, was standing before her mirror, fastening on a wig of long, straggling white hair.

"I declare I am almost afraid of myself," she muttered, shuddering a little as she stared at her own reflection in the glass.

Then she went to her door, and opening it noiselessly, crept out into the passage, and shut it.

There was light enough in both the upper and lower hall to dimly perceive objects.

Dora's room was on the floor below Miss Vidal's. As she got to the head of the stairs she stopped and listened, thinking she heard some one stirring.

After a moment she went on again, but stopped as the sounds were repeated.

"I thought everyone was in bed," she muttered, and stood still.

The noise, whatever it was, ceased, then began again. It was like some one walking, and not very quietly either, on a bare floor.

As she listened it seemed to come from the direction of the kitchen, and that was the only place where there was a bare floor.

Suddenly she heard the kitchen door open, and some one coming that way.

There was no possible place to conceal herself, and there was not time to get back up stairs; so she had to stand still.

The steps advanced, and turned at the corner from the kitchen passage.

Miss Vidal could dimly discern something white coming towards her, and her heart stood still.

It drew nearer, and she saw that it was an old woman in her night-dress and bare feet.

Miss Vidal stayed for no more, but turned and fled up the stairs, screaming at every step, and fell senseless at her own door.

When the roused household came hurrying to see what was the matter, there she lay with her powdered face and her white wig, and the rest of her ghostly disguises. They would not have known her, if her wig had not slipped on one side. As it was, they thought she was dead, but they dragged her into her room somehow, and got her upon the bed, and at last she came to.

There was a good deal of wonderment among the servants, but no one guessed the truth.

Miss Vidal gave no explanation to any one, but went quietly back to Rylewood by the first train the next day.

If Dora and Esther knew anything more about the matter than the servants they were wise enough to keep their own counsel.

"I think we were lucky to get rid of her so easily," Esther observed to her young step-mamma the day of Miss Vidal's departure. "How lucky it was that I found out what she was about, and gave her a turn at her own game. I shan't tell anyone but papa."

The result of that telling was that another cottage was taken as soon as Mr. Ryle came, and before they returned to Rylewood Miss Vidal, in response to a suggestion from him to that effect, had sought another home.

Her brother-in-law, at his little wife's entreaty, settled upon her an income sufficient for comfort.

THE CROWHERD.

Mr crowherd, old Eben Amos, is a rustic with as much realism as picturesqueness in his dress, and more homely directness than prettiness in his speech. Realism in rustics is everything, and to prettify is to falsify them. It is the rustic realism of this "vermin of a creature" that charms me.

He is truly a man of the fields, and his life and thoughts seem to be toned by the lives and the habits of the birds he scorns. His voice croaks and crows in one's ears, in a dull monotone like the crow, and on walking, his stiff legs are drawn behind him, and his body sways from side to side like the crow.

He looks at one suspiciously, with head aside, and answers questions after a cogitative pause and a croaking clearing of the throat; and with a snifter of the nostrils he emits a dry, respiratory sound like a young crow at its food. The villagers call him the crow man. His talk is all about dismal subjects, about which he croaks rather than talks. His speech bulks largely of shipwrecks, accidents, deaths, and disease of man and beast, famines and epidemics. There's nothing trivial in his subjects, yet I find such lugubrious subjects very lively when he speaks. They bulk so largely in his thoughts that he continually repeats them.

I think rustics find dismal subjects to have a soothing influence. Rustics every year repeat the stories of their lives, they return regularly with the seasons. The great thing to brag of is what one has seen and come through in his days, and not what one has read or heard. He says, "I can smoke my pipe, I can sing my song, I can tell my story, and I am quite contented. What more can a body want?" Has he enjoyed good health? He never had a stomach complaint but hunger when diet time came round; nothing ever put him past a meal, though he has had narrow escapes of being killed by falling off haystacks or high-heaped cart-loads of grain in the harvest field. And with a grim smile, he says, poor folk and bairns are neither easily killed nor poisoned.

This hale old man, who has seen, as he phrases it, eighty-six new years' days, and never got a penny from the parish, though his wages never were a pound a week, and he has been sorely "torn down" by numerous children and children's children; and who has, he says, with proud exactness, wrought all his days on farms, which he styles his servitudes, in four counties, and twelve parishes; and who possesses, as the neighbouring rustics phrase it—but whether in admiration or in fear I have never been able to find out—a terrible memory; this hale old crowherd, this "vermin of a creature," moralises that "country life is best; aye, far best. You ha'e the caller air, the caller earth, an' they're aye healthy; an' then you need never be troubled wi' a sore throat, or a sore breast. A body never tires, never loses fancy o' the country; in summer or winter it's aye bonnie, real bonnie. Gi'e me the country to live in, an' you may make kirks or mills o' the towns for a' I care. Every bairn s'ould be born an' brought up in the country."—*Good Words*.

A NEW CARD.—A gentleman travelling on the Continent hired a smart travelling servant, and on arriving at an inn in an Austrian village he, knowing the stringency of the police regulations that there prevail in regard to travellers, sent the servant for the usual "registry of travellers," that he might duly inscribe his name therein. The servant replied that he had anticipated his master's wishes, and had registered him in full form as a "Rentier Anglais" (English tenant). "But how have you entered my name? I have not told it you." "I can't exactly pronounce it, but I copied it faithfully from milor's port-manteau." "But it is not there. Bring me the book, and let me see what you have done." What was his amazement at finding, instead of a very plain English name of two syllables, the following portentous entry of himself: "Monsieur Warrantedsolidleather, Anglais Rentier."

OPALS AND DIAMONDS.

-o-

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT would she do, she wondered, vaguely. Say, "yes," and become his happy wife, passing all the rest of her life at his side, gaining a crown of earthly joy at the sacrifice of another's peace—another's welfare? Or would she have the strength to say him nay, to do as honour dictated, to drive him from her for ever and aye, and make her future barren and bare, her life, which would probably reach to three-score years, a bitterness and a burden—a burden that would increase with increasing years, grow bitterer and more unlovely, day by day in its lonely solitude, for she knew that if she did not marry Sir Lionel she could never be any other man's wife, never would wed O'Hara.

"The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed, And say at night, 'Would God the day were here,' And say at dawn, 'Would God the day were dead,'

With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed, And wear remorse of heart for thine attire, Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head—

This is the end of every man's desire."

Maud's voice broke in on her musings, reading out the lines clearly and steadily, and she shivered as she listened. They seemed to foreshadow her own doom, to show her what her future would be, wishing night day and day night in her eagerness to be rid of the burden of living, and nearer the rest and quiet of the silent grave.

"Glorious lines," observed Maud, breaking off for a moment.

"Yes, but very painful, I think."

"Do you, why?"

"I—I hardly know."

"I don't suppose you do, you are too young yet to know much about the 'burden of long living.'"

"True. Still I shall be old some day. We are a long-lived race."

"We are, but not a very melancholy or miserable one. Aunt Pattison, I consider, is a particularly cheerful old lady, despite her seventy years. She doesn't wear 'remorse of heart' or 'pain for her girdle.' Do you think she looked as though she did when you were staying with her last year?"

"No, she was invariably brisk and cheerful, interested in all mundane matters, and—"

"Even down to selling her old clothes to the highest bidder, and dining out once a week at her friend's expense, to keep down the butcher's bill."

"Maud!"

"It is a fact, my dear; at least, it was when I stayed with her. I used to be immensely amused at her endeavours at thrift and economy, especially as she has an ample income. If you think when you are the wrong side of fifty that there is any chance of your being afflicted with remorse, or of being attacked with 'moonstruck madness, moping melancholy,' I should advise you to do as our respected relative does, look sharply after the candle-ends and empty bottles. You will be so fully occupied that you won't have time to think of the burden of living, or any of those dreadful things Swinburne talks about. And now we had better take a stroll, and then go into tea. I won't read any more to you, for you look quite pale and frightened, and it won't do for you to wear a ghostly aspect to-morrow. I shall send you off to bed early this evening to see if a long spell of beauty-sleep won't bring the roses back to your cheeks."

The next day, however, in spite of her sister's care, Maggie was very white and heavy-eyed, and restless to a degree.

She wandered about the house in an aimless fashion, or in the shady alleys of the old garden—a slim, white-robed figure, with a lovely, anxious face.

The morning waned, the afternoon went on apace.

"He is not coming," she murmured to herself, with a feeling almost akin to relief, at the prospect of another respite.

"Something must have detained Sir Lionel," remarked Maud, in a low tone, after their frugal tea was finished.

"I suppose so," assented her sister; and not caring to discuss the subject Maggie wandered out to the garden again, and sat on a low seat in the little vine-clad arbour at the far end, her eyes bent on the ground, her hands loosely clasped in her lap, indulging in day-dreams engendered by her restless thoughts, and the languor of the sultry summer day.

The sun was shining brightly, bees were sailing over the mignonette and the perfumed roses, the air was laden with the scent of the blossoming pea and climbing woodbine; in the dewy meadows the harsh, monotonous call of the corn-crake was heard, and the lowing of the kine, and the bleating of sheep, intermingled with the short, sharp barks of a dog, yet none of the sounds or sights attracted the young girl's notice. Her dreams were too sweet, too absorbing, and she did not move till a dark shadow fell athwart the entrance of the sunny arbour, and looking up with a start she found herself face to face with the man of whom she had been dreaming.

For a while neither spoke, but stood looking at each other, gazing into each other's eyes in spell-bound silence.

At last he made a step forward, holding out his hands.

"Maggie," he said, gently, "Maggie, I have come for my answer. Will you tell me now, if I am to be the happiest man on earth or the most wretched?"

At his appeal she tried to speak—tried to break the spell that held her dumb; but something swelled in her throat, and choked back the words that rose to her quivering lips, while tears were dangerously near falling from the star-like eyes.

"Have I startled you, love, by my sudden appearance?" he went on, gently, noting her evident distress. "I saw you sitting here as I passed along the road, and could not resist coming straight to you unannounced. I longed to be with you again. These last three days have been such dreary ones to me, unblest by your sweet presence. I have realised what my life would be now without you; a mere wilderness—a desert. I have dreamt that I might make my paradise on earth; it can only be made by you. Which is the future to be, Maggie, for me, a wilderness or a paradise? What answer am I to have, 'yes' or 'no'?"

"Yes," she murmured, faintly, her scruples swept away, her resolution to keep her word broken down by the pleading of the man she loved.

As he heard the faintly-breathed monosyllable he snatched her in his arms, and held her pressed against his breast, as though he never meant to loose her, kissing her pale cheeks till they glowed again.

"My dearest, you make me so happy," he whispered at last, gazing down fondly at the exquisite face pillowed on his breast. "My life has been purposeless hitherto. I have missed and felt the need of the sympathy and tenderness a wife alone can give, the want of the delicate tracery a loving woman's hand alone can complete to make existence perfect. From the first day I saw you my paramount wish was to have you always at my side, to make you mine, to win your love, to crown all the other good gifts fortune has bestowed on me; and I have succeeded. I feel I have won more than I deserve."

"Oh! no, not that," said Maggie, shyly, lifting a pair of radiant violet eyes to his; "not more than you deserve. I feel that I am not worthy of your great love."

"More than worthy, sweetheart," he rejoined, pressing the nestling head against him with his gentle hand. "You are the dearest woman in the world to me."

"I am so glad," she answered, with a sigh of supreme content. "You might have chosen some beautiful, titled woman to be your wife, and to love."

"Who could be more beautiful to me, little witch?" he asked, fondly.

"I—I don't know. Only I am so insignificant—such a nobody for you to choose."

"Well, you will be a 'nobody' no longer."

"I know," she said, with loving humility.

"You raise me from obscurity. You honour me with your love, and Heaven grant I may ever deserve it, that I may prove worthy of it in the years to come."

"You will, Maggie, I know." He laid his cheek passionately on the nestling, golden head, and then lifting her face to his gaze, looked down into the violet eyes, as though trying to read her inmost soul. "You love me—love me better than aught else in the whole wide world?"

"Yes," she answered, firmly, "better than aught else in the whole wide world, better than life itself, for life without you would be worthless."

"My darling!" and again he clasped her close to him, "you will let it be very soon?"

He said after a while,

"What?" she asked, a little bewildered.

"Our marriage. I want my happiness. I want to have you all to myself. I am selfish, I suppose, but I shall not feel quite at rest till you are bound to me by the strongest tie that can unite man and woman."

"If you wish," she faltered.

"I do wish it, dearest."

"And—and your mother? Will she consent? Will she receive me as her daughter?"

"Most assuredly she will," he responded, promptly. "It is the dearest wish of her heart to see you my wife."

"I am so glad. I should dread her coldness."

"You have nothing to fear in that way. You must have noticed how partial she is to you."

"She has always been most kind," acknowledged Maggie.

"And the pastor, what will he say?" queried her lover, regarding her with smiling eyes.

"I—I hardly know," she answered, with paling cheeks, for it occurred to her that her father might think it odd a second suitor coming to beg for his permission to marry her, as the first was not yet disposed of.

"Do you think he will not give his consent?" asked the Baronet, anxiously.

"I don't think he will do that, Sir Lionel, but—"

"Lionel, please," he interrupted.

"Lionel, then," she repeated, obediently, "but do not please me to see him about it for a day or two, until Maud has spoken to him on the subject. She is so clever. She can generally manage to make him do whatever she pleases."

"She will be our wife, then?"

"Yes."

"I hope she will do her best for me."

"I am sure she will."

"Do you think your father will be very obdurate?"

"I think not. Maud will smooth matters over and make it all right with him. I have great faith in her powers."

"Which was the truth. Maggie knew the only person who could explain matters to the rocker in a satisfactory manner was her clever and unscrupulous sister, who could twist him round her little finger like a bit of silk."

"I am glad to hear it, as there will be a difficulty with Mr. Randal."

"Where is Miss Maud?" he added, quickly.

"I should like to see her."

"Why, here she comes," ejaculated Maggie, as the young lady in question appeared at the top of the path leading to the arbour, hesitated a moment, and then seeing the lovers beckon her came towards them.

"How do you do, Sir Lionel?" she said

composedly, though somewhat taken by surprise. "I had no idea that you had returned."

"I only came back this afternoon," he explained, "and came straight from Inchfield station here. I wanted to see your sister, so spying her in the arbour I came over the stile, instead of going round by the road, and announced myself."

"Oh! I see."

"You know what I came for, I suppose," he went on. "You must congratulate me. Maggie has promised to be my wife."

"I congratulate you most sincerely," she responded, a quick flash of triumph lighting up her face.

"I hope you approve of me, and will receive me as a brother-in-law?" he said, jestingly.

"I do indeed," she answered, cordially, giving him her hand with a little graceful gesture. "There is no one I would sooner welcome in that position than yourself."

"Thanks. That is encouraging. Do you think the other members of your family will be as kind?"

"My sisters I know will welcome you."

"And your father? Maggie tells me there may be a slight difficulty in obtaining his consent."

"There may be," assented Maud, with one swift glance at her sister's down-drooped blonde head, knowing full well that the difficulty would be; but saying suavely, "You see, Maggie is the youngest, and resembles so strongly our dear mother, that, naturally, he will be loath to part with her."

"Naturally. If I were he I should never give such a treasure into another man's keeping," pouting his love's little fingers at the speaker.

"He will know that she will be safe in your hands," and the look in Maud's blue eyes was a greater compliment than her words.

"Thanks; it is very good of you to say so, and I hope you will kindly use your influence with your father, and try to get him to consent to our marriage."

"I will do my best."

"And when may I see him, do you think?"

"Give me two days to break the news to him."

"Sunday, then?"

"Yes. He will be busy on that day, his mind full of his sermons, and most likely he will say yeat once in order to be left alone."

"That is a capital idea; I shall certainly act on it."

"Do, and I hope success will attend your efforts."

"Thanks; I hope it will—I shall be a very miserable man if it doesn't. And now good-bye. I shall come over to-morrow if I may, Maggie, to see you."

"Yes, come if you wish," she assented, looking at him tenderly.

"I will, then," and stooping he kissed her cheek, over which the carnation-red stole at the touch of his moustached tips; and shaking hands with Maud he went slowly away, with many a lingering, backward glance at the form he loved.

CHAPTER XII.

THE AMBASSADOR.

"So it is an accomplished fact at last," said Maud, when he was but of sight.

"Yes."

"You are to be Lady Molyneux."

"Yes."

"I congratulate you. You are a lucky girl to be the affianced bride of a man of his wealth and position. You will have everything you want, and a magnificent house, and, above all, the opals and diamonds. I envy you those most."

"Opals and diamonds gleaming bright, With your changing rainbow light, Well have ye done your part, Ye have won his lady's heart."

"No—no!" cried Maggie, quickly, a troubled look of pain in her soft eyes. "Don't say that;

don't think I am marrying him for his wealth or any of his grand possessions. I would marry him if he were a beggar, without a penny in the world."

"Would you?" said her sister, doubtfully.

"I wouldn't; I have too great an admiration for the despots of Egypt to marry any man unless he had a goodly income to offer."

"I wish he were poor," went on the other, "that I might show my disinterestedness. It is only my great, my overpowering love for him that has made me consent to be his wife. I cannot live without him—I worship him!" she added, passionately.

And she did. Brynarsay. "One love will but once during life, and that is the first time." But this is to be doubted—the second love, or the love of mature years, is more intense, more passionate, more lasting.

The first affection of very young people is often but a light and evanescent feeling, giving place later on to one wholly absorbing, and which was so with Maggie. She had been flattered and pleased by Terence O'Hara's attention, and fascinated by his pleasant Irish manner, but the feeling she had entertained for him had been weak and fleeting. With Lionel Molyneux it was very different; her heart had gone out to him utterly and entirely, and was unlikely to return to her keeping.

She was ready to sacrifice anything to become his wife. Maud, however, totally incapable of making any sacrifice herself, couldn't understand anyone else doing so, and remarked coolly,—

"You only wish that, my child, because you know that he is not and never will be poor."

"I do not, on my honour. I would rather be his wife, and live in a humble cottage, giving up all luxuries and comforts, than marry any other man, even were he a duke."

"Indeed! You would try love in a cottage?"

"I would most gladly," she answered fervently; "and I only wish that our position could be reversed, that I might provoke you and all others who doubt the sincerity of my affection how truly and honestly I love him."

"Wish that he was a beggar, and you earl of Queen Cophetua, in fact?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am extremely glad that you will not have a chance of exhibiting to the world in general, and myself in particular, the depth, height, and breadth of this wonderful affection. What on earth would be the good of it? He is quite content with the present arrangement of affairs. I can't understand people wanting to indulge in quixotism, and tilt at metaphorical windmills, and go on their way to make themselves unhappy."

"You can never have been in love, then, Maud."

"No, I suppose not, and I shall try to avoid the tender passion if its effects are so unpleasant as it is on you."

"I don't find it unpleasant."

"What when it makes you say you could not live without him?"

"Even with that."

"I should be very sorry to care for a person so much that life would be valueless to me without them. You see," went on the sister seriously, "so many things may part lovers, or even husband and wife. First of all, there is death; whose call we must all obey, sooner or later; then there is jealousy, incompatibility of temper, untruthfulness, forced separation, and a thousand and one little things over which we have no control. Men may cease to care for his wife, after years of married life, if he finds that she does not care for him as much as he believed, or if he discovers anything in her past which he disapproves, or—"

"That is what I dread," broke in Maggie, lifting a white haggard face to her companion's gaze.

"What?"

"That Sir Lionel will discover that I am

deceived him, that I was engaged all the time he thought me free, that I had no shadow of a right to listen to his tender words; that I was the plighted wife of another man when I said yes to him. I dread losing his love if he hears of my promise to Terence. I have been acting a lie during those past weeks, and he hates and despises untruthfulness. He told me once he thought nothing justified a lie, and that we should neither act nor speak them. I don't go on, Maud, like this. I will tell him tomorrow the whole truth, and if, after that, he will still ask me for his wife I will write to Terence, begging him to release me, saying that I have never married him now, I assure he will do so."

"And I am sure he will not," rejoined the other calmly. "It will be the greatest piece of folly you ever perpetrated if you do that. Saying so to Sir Lionel, he will never hear of it. Can you trust to my discretion? I have promised to settle matters with Terence? I will manage him so that he shall not molest you or interfere with you in any way. Is not that enough?"

"Yes, you—it is very kind of you," faltered the poor butterfly, striving to gain her own way, and do what her conscience told her was the only clear and honourable course to pursue, but being helpless in the hands of the clever woman who had ruled her almost from the hour of her birth, and in whose hands she was still as a wax.

"What you suggest would be the worst thing in the world. Terence would come straight from the wilds of Yorkshire, refuse to give you up, probably attack Sir Lionel furiously; you know, rather you don't know, for you never took the trouble to study his temperament, of what a fiery disposition he is, and it would result in a deadly quarrel between the two men, with perhaps a fatal ending. I suppose you wouldn't like to see him killed," suggested Maud with cold calmness, determined that Maggie should do as she liked, resolved not to forego one iota of her revenge upon O'Hara, and I am sure it would distress you to see Lionel Molyneux stretched dead at your feet, slain by a frenzied blow from your discarded lover."

"Don't—don't!" gasped Maggie, covering her eyes with a pair of trembling hands. "I dare not even think of such a fearful thing!"

"Then if you don't want something unpleasant to happen, you had better leave the management of affairs to me."

"Do what you will—only—keep them apart," moaned the young girl, still trembling and shuddering.

"That is right. I am glad you are going to be sensible. Everything will come right. Sir Lionel will hear nothing."

"But—Terence must be told. You—I—you—some one must write to him and tell him I am going to marry another man."

"Of course, I will do this," replied Maud, in the coolest manner possible. "I will send him a letter in a day or two." She did not add that the said letter would contain not one word with reference to her sister's intended marriage, but simply say that she had hurt her hand, and therefore had asked her (Maud) to write to him.

"Thanks," ejaculated Maggie gratefully. "I feel I could not write to him on such a subject."

"Of course not; it will be better for me to do it."

"Yes, and—tell him how sorry I am that I have learnt to love someone else. Say that indeed I could not help it, and that I tried to be true to him, and that I hope he will be happy," said the young girl piteously, "and meet some other woman who will take my place in his heart. And send him this, please," she added, holding out the shabby little ring he had given her, the pledge of her betrothal.

"Yes, certainly," answered her sister, taking the little gold circle, and slipping it into her pocket. "I will do all that you wish."

"And—and you think I shall be safe. You

think Lionel"—how softly, and tremulously she uttered the name—"will never know, never hear about my engagement?"

"I think you will be quite safe. I shall give Laura and Kate rather more than a hint to keep silent. You are aware Kate never liked Terence, and Laura is so much occupied with Walter London, and her distribution of beef-tea and bibles, that she won't give your affairs a second thought."

"And—father?"

"That will be a more difficult task."

"Do—do—you think he won't consent?"

"I think he will, if properly managed. Of course it will be a great surprise to him at first, but fortunately for you, as you know he did not like your first lover much, and gave this consent very reluctantly, so I fancy he will not be sorry when he hears that you have changed your mind, and want to marry some one else."

"I hope he won't."

"I hope so too. But you may depend upon my doing my best for you. I will speak to him to-morrow morning."

And on the morrow, soon after Mr. Randal retired to his study to pore over his beloved dusty, ancient books, he was disturbed by the entrance of his second daughter.

The rector was sitting at a table strewn with papers and parchments, studying the pages of an old black-letter bible. At his right hand was Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest," at his left "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," on a chair beside him lay Barrow's "Life of Christ," and a volume of Thomas à Kempis's soul-calming pages, and all round the room the walls above the old oak wainscot, enriched with carvings of Satyr heads, grapes and vine-leaves, and all manner of quaint designs, were lined with ponderous-looking tomes, in antique bindings, of a bygone day.

"Ah, Maud, my dear, is it you?" he remarked, looking up.

"Yes, father. I want to speak to you. Can you spare me a few moments?"

"Certainly, my child," he answered, settling himself back in the queer three-cornered chair, which was in character with the rest of the old-fashioned room, and keeping his finger between the pages of the bible. "What is it you have to say to me?"

"It is about Maggie."

"Maggie!" he ejaculated, sitting up straight, an eager, anxious look in his blue eyes, and the look and action were a revelation of love she was interested at once in anything that concerned his favourite child. "Maggie! Is there anything wrong with her?"

"Nothing much. Nothing but what can be set right, if you wish it."

"I shall wish anything that will be for her good," he answered quickly.

"I am glad of that. I believe you don't think about a marriage with Terence O'Hara would be for her good?"

"No," replied the rector, slowly. "I hardly think so. What makes you speak of him? Has he returned? Does he want to take my bird from her home nest to some distant place?" and the old man's face was darkened and shadowed, as he spoke, with mistrust and doubt.

"No, he has not returned to Wingfield, and I speak of him this morning because Maggie has asked me to do so. She has come round to our way of thinking at last, and no longer wishes to be his wife!"

"I am glad of that—very glad!" said Mr. Randal, with a deep sigh of relief.

"So am I. He was not to be depended on, and would have failed to make her happy."

"I am of that opinion! I never quite trusted him."

"Nor did I, and I am truly glad the engagement was a private one, known only to ourselves!"

"Why?"

"Because it might militate against her future matrimonial prospects!"

"True."

"O course she will gain other lovers," was

on Maud, feeling her way carefully; "she is so lovely!"

"Yes, I fear she will."

"Why fear, father?"

"Because she is so dear to me, I do not care to part with her!"

"Yet you cannot hope to keep her with you always?"

"No, that would be selfish. I am aware, and I cannot stay with her always, either, so I suppose I shall have some day to give her to the keeping of another man. I should wish, though, it were one whom I could wholly trust, and who would let my darling live near me, while my little span of life lasts!"

"And if such a one came, you would give her to him?"

"He has loved him and wished it, yes!"

"You would part with her willingly—without any regret?"

"Yes," he answered slowly and reflectively. "To such a man as I have in my mind's eye I think I would give her without a single regret."

"I am glad of that, father!" went on Maud, veiling the triumph shining in her eyes by dropping their heavy lids, "for the time has come, and you are called upon to make the sacrifice!"

"What do you mean?" he demanded, in utter bewilderment.

"Maggie has another lover—has received another proposal!"

"Another lover!" gasped the Rector, pushing his spectacles up to his forehead, and staring at Maud, as though he could see her better without the aid of glasses.

"Yes, another lover!"

"Who—who is it?"

"Lionel Molyneux."

"Lionel Molyneux!" repeated the old man, in a dazed kind of way, and then he remained silent, looking down at the antique tome in his hand.

"I hope you won't object to it?" continued his daughter after awhile. "Maggie is very much in love with him, and he is such a good, honest, upright fellow, so perfectly trustworthy and reliable, that I feel sure he would make her a good husband!"

"Yes," agreed Mr. Randal, still in a mechanical sort of way.

"And then he has so much to offer. Position, wealth, a time-honoured name, all we could possibly wish for!" she went on following up the advantages she had gained; "more than we have ever dreamt of getting for our darling. She will be above all want and care for the rest of her life—as his wife, and it will be a great load off our minds to think she is well provided for, won't it?"

"Yes," he agreed again.

"Then you will consent?" she asked with uncontrollable eagerness, a bright red spot burning feverishly on either cheek.

"I—I don't know!" he hesitated; "there is madness in the family, and that is a terrible drawback."

"I don't see that! The madness only breaks out now and then, and often skips a generation or two. There is not the least sign of it about Sir Lionel. He is as sane as you or I, and surely his wealth and position weigh in the scale against the mere chance of his going out of his mind for awhile? You know they don't become hopeless lunatics, and after a slight attack recover their senses and become all right again!"

"Sometimes!" agreed the Rector. "But it was not so in the case of Sir Robert, this young fellow's grandfather. I remember he died mad."

"It does not follow that Sir Lionel will, because his grandfather did!"

"No, certainly not."

"And if you refuse your consent," declared Maud, playing her trump card, "I think it will kill Maggie. She told me only yesterday that she loved him so dearly that she could not live without him."

"Does the child love him so much?"



["THERE IS MADNESS IN THE FAMILY," SAID THE RECTOR, "AND THAT IS A TERRIBLE DRAWBACK."]

"She simply adores him, and he worships her."

"In that case, then," said her father slowly, and somewhat reluctantly, "I suppose I must consent to it."

"It will be the best thing to secure her happiness in the future."

"I hope so."

"I am sure of it. Then I may tell Sir Lionel that you will see him, and, Maggie, that you won't refuse?"

"Yes."

"Thanks, father. I am sure you will never regret this. And, by-the-way, I think it will be as well not to mention anything about O'Hara to Sir Lionel. As it was a mere half-and-half sort of engagement, known only to ourselves, it will be better now not to publish it."

"Yes, perhaps you are right," assented Mr. Randal, eager now that he had given his consent, to get back to the perusal of his beloved books and parchments."

"I think I am," and with a triumphant smile curving her lips and a hard, steely glitter in her blue orbs Maud left the study, and went to tell the lovers the success of her mission.

They were sitting out in the garden, under the leaf-burdened chestnut, with Jacko and Rufus stretched at their feet.

"Well, what news?" cried the Baronet, eagerly.

"Good news."

"Does he consent?"

"He will do so when you ask him to."

"How can I thank you, Maud, for your kind intervention?"

"I don't want to be thanked," she declared, smilingly. "I am only too glad to have won his consent."

"It is awfully good of you, isn't it, Maggie?"

"Yes," replied the young girl, looking at her with grateful eyes. "I am sure he would have refused me if I had gone to him first."

"Probably he would," agreed Maud, thinking of the trump card,

"I shall feel quite bold and confident now, when I go to him on Sunday."

And he did. He had no misgivings as he entered the book-lined, old-fashioned study, where the rector was waiting to receive him with considerable nervousness.

The interview was not a very long one. In a few straightforward, manly words the baronet told his love, and begged for Mr. Randal's consent to his speedy marriage with his youngest daughter; and the father, pleasantly impressed by the handsome face and winning manners of his would-be son-in-law, gave it, and could not but feel that his darling was lucky to have won such a man for a husband.

"Maggie, you will let it be soon?" he pleaded that evening, as they strolled through the dewy meadows after church.

"You—you are in a great hurry," she murmured, shyly, glad of the friendly darkness that hid her blushing cheeks.

"Am I? And do you wonder at that? Eh, little woman?"

"I—I don't know."

"Don't you? Well, I think you ought. I want you for my own—my very own."

"Am I not your own now?" she asked, tenderly.

"In a way you are," he acknowledged, "but I have to share you with others—your father, your sisters. I want to have you all to myself. Life is so short. I want to grasp my happiness while I can, ere it eludes me."

"How can it elude you? I am here. I belong to you for ever," and she nestled closer to his side, within the protecting circle of his supporting arm.

"Dearest," he whispered, with a kiss pressed on the rosy mouth near his own. "I know it. Still I want you to give yourself to me absolutely—to be bound to me by the tenderest of all ties. When will you come to me?" he went on, after a pause, "to gladden my hearth and home?"

"When you wish, Lionel!" she murmured, yielding to his pleadings.

"This day month, then!"

"So soon!"

"Soon, darling! It will seem an age to me. Every minute an hour, every hour a day, every day a week, until I stand at the altar beside you, and hear you say 'I will.' Say yes?"

So the "yes" he pleaded for was said, and he went away a happy man, and told his mother she would soon have to welcome a daughter-in-law. And all Wingfield was shortly electrified by the news that Sir Lionel Molyneux—the catch of the county—was going to marry the rector's youngest daughter. And people talked of it, canvassed it, and pro and coned the whole affair; and it was announced in fashionable papers and discussed in London, but never a word of the news reached the ears of the man who was working so hard for fame and wealth in the old house on the faraway lonely Yorkshire moor, who worked for the woman he loved with desperate energy, and thought of her, as he mixed the colours on his pallet, and put in the delicate shades and tints, as the frescoes grew under his skilled hands, and decorated the walls of Mr. Belton's mansion.

He dreamt a dream that was never to be realised, indulged in sweet hopes that were fated to be broken and marred, lived in a fool's paradise, and was happy, fortunately not having the power to look into the future that was destined to be so blank and dreary for him, and see the sorrow that was to come, and be his portion for all the years of his life, be they few or many.

(To be continued.)

EIGHTY-THREE per cent of the population of the United States is composed of white natives and the immigrants from Germany and Great Britain, leaving four per cent. from other countries and thirteen per cent. for those of African descent.



["COWARD!" CRIED A SHARP, CLEAR VOICE, AND LORD CARLYON STEPPED FORWARD AND GRASPED THE MAN'S ARM.]

NOVELLETTE.]

MY INNOCENT SISTER.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE PINE WOOD AT SUNSET.

SEVERAL days had passed since that interview with my lover by the lake. Before mamma and papa, whom I did not wish to worry yet with my broken engagement, Perais and I appeared the same as ever, but when alone we very rarely spoke, and then only on very indifferent subjects.

Denzel had gone over to his own estate, some little distance from Lord Carlyon's place, to stay for some time. He informed mamma, and she, fancying that he was preparing it for me, was well content. He and I had never spoken since the day on which I gave him back his ring.

I do not think it is given to many to suffer as I did; I pray that it is not. There were times when I felt that I must go to him and ask for a reconciliation, no matter if his love were no longer mine. My soul craved for one embrace, one clasp of his dear hand—his presence! My eyes were hot and dry with staring out of the window in the vain hope of seeing his figure passing along the road at the end of the avenue, and yet I know that if he had come I should have met him with a cold smile, and still colder words.

One evening—oh! shall I ever forget it?—Perais had gone to her room on the plea of a headache; mamma and papa were having a sleep in the drawing-room; so feeling lonely I threw a small blue cashmere shawl round my head, and went out into the grounds for a stroll. It was September now, and the tall trees were just changing their summer garb of deep green for tender tints of red, brown, and gold.

The air seemed very still, though a soft breeze whispered among the leaves, and ruffled the surface of the dark, broad river where I

walked, thinking as usual over my saddened life. I walked on until I reached the delicate-fretted iron bridge that led across the river to the pine wood. I lingered here for a few moments gazing down into the deep waters, where I could see mirrored my pale serious face, so altered since that day only a few weeks before. But the voices of the pines seemed to urge me on, and so I entered the wood keeping to the beaten track, for by taking this path I could see the glorious hues of the sun as it set slowly behind a cluster of tall, straight pines in the distance.

I had gone a great way into the wood, where the calm and quiet deepened almost to gloom, for the trees were very thick there, so thick that scarcely a tiny patch of the grey evening sky could be seen through the spreading branches, and beyond the sun was setting in a thousand delicate colours, making the darkness here more intense.

Just through the openings between the tall, straight trunks of the pines glimmered a bright crimson line, fading off to a delicate pink above the dark tops of the trees; and away across the river stretched a wide, golden pink-tinged sea.

There was a grandeur in the scene that impressed me, the quiet calm of the pine wood broken only by the whispering of the wind in the topmost branches of the trees, and the gentle murmuring of a tiny brook as it leaped laughingly over its pebbly bed. The song of the birds was stilled; even the insects were silent, and a great and mighty hush was over all the earth.

It seemed to my fanciful brain as if Nature was holding herself in waiting, and gradually the sky was flushed with one great expanse of deep red, and then the silence of the wood was broken by the sound of voices, not loud, but none the less charged with bitter, passionate anger.

"Perais, I have seen you with him, and noted his glances of love, and watched you; seen you return them with a look in your eyes

you never gave me—no, not even in the first days of our love," cried a voice, that had in it a familiar ring, but when or where I had heard it before I could not tell. It was a man's voice.

"I have learned what true love is since then," returned my sister's voice.

"By Heaven, if I swing for it, I will claim you before all the world," exclaimed that strange, yet familiar voice, that would have sounded pleasant and musical had it not been for the fierce threatening tone in which his words were uttered.

I came to a sudden standstill, almost staggering against a tree in my surprise. Who was this man who talked so confidently of claiming my beautiful sister?—and I peered through the thick tangled mass of underwood from behind which his voice came, and I saw my sister standing, or rather, leaning against the bole of a tree, her hands clasped tightly, her pale, proud, even defiant face half averted from her companion whom, I recognized to be the young stranger we had met in Lord Carlyon's grounds.

His face wore that same devil-me-care, reckless expression, but the grey eyes had an ugly, cruel glitter in them that made me shudder. At last Perais spoke; and, oh! how I pitied her in that moment. Her voice had lost none of its old clear ring, but her great lustrous eyes wore such a hunted look!

"You dare not carry out your threat," she said, quietly, but I could see the quick heaving of her bosom from my hiding place, and little as she deserved it I pitied her.

"Dare not! You know not what I dare to gain my ends," replied her companion, with a cruel, hissing laugh. "You see this," he added, drawing something bright and glittering from his breast-pocket. "It would not take much to make me use it."

"Coward!" cried a sharp, clear voice, and, to my horror, Lord Carlyon stepped forward into the small open space and grasped the man's arm.

They stood for a moment eyeing each other with cruel, deadly hate in their looks, and then on the still night air there rang the sharp report of a pistol. I am no coward, but some demon seemed to chain me to the spot. I had no power to move or speak. I could only stand there with cold, numb limbs, and wide, staring eyes gazing at the still form of Frank, Lord Carlyon, as he lay on the damp, green earth; his white face upturned to the sky, that was still flushed with the dull red glow of the September sunset, and from his temple, a dull red stream issued, mottling the dark earth and bright, golden-brown hair.

Suddenly a sharp quiver passed across his face, on which the death-dew were gathering fast, and he opened his eyes. The pitiful, agonised pleading in those glazed orbs as they sought my sister's white, horror-stricken face haunted me now. He put one hand out feebly, and she moved slowly, mechanically, towards him, while his momentary look with folded arms looked on his work with a grim, agonised smile that took away all the beauty of the stilled face.

"Peris!—tell me!" gasped the dying man, a white froth gathering on his stiffening lips with the effort of speaking—"tell me—you are—innocent!"

Over the beautiful proud face came a terrible change. The glowing southern tint of her complexion faded away, and the sweet, oblique features seemed to shrink, and the livid, quivering lips refused their office. She threw herself across his body, and writhed as one in mortal agony, and great tearless robes shook her frame.

"Peris! Frank! have pity! forgive me!" she cried at last, lifting her despairing face to the calm heavens. She turned as though about to press her lips to his, but he motioned her away. My wounds were fully avenged in that most bitter hour!

"Guilty!" Only that one word; but, oh! the concentrated agony it contained! A half scornful, half reproachful light shone in his eyes for a moment, lighting the handsome, boyish face into fresh life again, and then a wild spasm of pain contracted the features. He made a wild clutch at the empty, chilly air, and then fell back amongst the tangled weeds and matted blue-bells; the once careless debonaire face set in the cold calm of death, with that awful, reproachful expression still lingering round the stiff, fish-like lips. Dead and unforgiving.

"Oh, Heaven! you have murdered him!" cried Peris in a voice thrilling with a strange mixture of horror and hate.

She stood perfectly still—still as a marble statue, for one moment; but the terrible truth dawned upon her as she sprang forward with the grace and swiftness of a panther, and ere I could move or cry out there were two corpses lying on the wet earth, two pale faces turned to the now dark sky, and my second, powerless sister's soul was stained with the blood of a fellow creature.

And then my feet took me to themselves, wings; and I fled, not in the direction of home. How could I face my father and mother and tell them that their youngest-born, their pride, was a murderer! And so I rushed blindly on through the masses of primly bush and bramble, leaving my delicate skin in my head-long rush.

When I passed, which I did from sheer weakness, I found myself in an open field hedged in from the roadway by tall, thick hedges of beechwood. I threw myself down on the long wet grass and raised my eyes to the far-away heavens, wondering, in a dazed kind of way, what thoughts had thought of such deeds as I had just seen committed.

The stars were gleaming with more than their usual brilliancy; it seemed to me, and the moon shed a bright, clear flood of silver radiance over meadow, river, and wood. There was no friendly darkness to hide that terrible deed of blood, and I shuddered, as I pictured those two dead, pale faces looking up with their dim, sightless eyes to the calm moonlike sky, and their stiff blood-stained hair and once strong

limbs, now lying limp and nerveless. The whole scene was so vividly before me that I started up with a shriek, as a hand was laid gently on my shoulder, and then the voice of mamma's own maid speaking reassured me.

"Come, Miss Eisdale, we have been searching all over the place for you; they are all in a terrible way, and your poor dear mamma is half beside herself with grief. Mr. Dentil—"

"Mr. Dentil?" I repeated, mechanically. My brain was numbed, and I scarcely heeded her words.

"Yes, there has been a terrible murder committed in the place, Miss Eisdale, and Mr. Dentil was found standing beside the dead bodies, with a pistol in his hand. Miss Eisdale, in a hurried whisper, and looking round her half fearfully, but still on her face was that ghastly look of pleasure at having news to tell.

I did not answer her, but walked on over the damp grass, the dead faces of those two men going before me like a phantom. Then, gradually, the mists cleared away, and I turned, with a wild, horror-shrieking at my heart. What was this thing she had spoken of, Dentil? He had been found standing over them with a pistol in his hand. What then?

"Do you mean that Dentil Eisdale is accused of this murder you speak of?" I asked, standing still in the moonlit grounds, and facing her. My voice was hoarse and strained; I scarcely recognised it myself; no wonder she started.

"Yes, miss," she answered, clasping her hands together, "and is Miss Peris's lover, Lord Carlyon, that he has killed. She is nearly dead with grief. Oh, Miss Eisdale, dear, don't faint. But, what made you go so far away, and why were you kneeling there in the wet grass?" she added, the thought striking her all of a sudden, I suppose, that my conduct was strange.

"I thought to meet Mr. Eisdale," I said, wearily. "Don't worry me, Eisdale. I feel as though I were going mad."

And with a sympathetic glance at my face she put her hand through my arm, and led me towards home. A horrid feeling—not fear, not cowardice, but a sickening dread—fell upon me as we neared the wood. I could see the broad smooth river, with the bending its wayward willows, reflected in moon-kissed depths, and the wood, with its tall, straight, whispering pines, bathed in a flood of silver light.

The night breeze was not strong enough to move their thick branches, and they reared their dark heads to the star-spangled sky motionless, still as the two men who lay stiff and stark on the dark mossy ground beneath their grim shelter, waiting in death patience the return of the men who had gone in quest of a sister to carry them to Gear Wood Towers, where I learned afterwards they were both taken.

"We need go through the wood, miss," said Eisdale; and I followed her over the damp grass land, the long train of my silken robe trailing after me with a dull, swishing sound, for it was thick and heavy with damp, slayey earth.

I remember the dull apathetic horror that came over me as I entered the brightly lighted hall, and met mamma coming out of the library, which lay at the farther end. There was such a look of horror and pity on her dear face, as she walked swiftly, but noiselessly across the resplendent pavement, and for the first time I realised the truth. Peris was a murderer. She whom I had always called my innocent sister, and by some strange concatenation of circumstances, Dentil, my love, was accused of having committed the murder.

"Oh, mamma, mamma!" I cried, flinging myself into her outstretched arms. "What am I to do?"

She did not know that while she tried in the sweet fashion, all her own, to soothe and comfort me that my heart and brain were throbbing with wild fierce pain, not for my lover's arrest, but for the dread black secret that was locked in my heart.

Oh, my sweet mother! you must have thought me selfish and ungrateful in those first miserable days, though you understood afterwards. I remember the quick look of pain that darkened her face, as I turned impatiently away, begging to be let go to my room alone. But her love never failed me. She rose, and led me up the stairs. I was so weak that I staggered, and then when she had placed me on a lounge, and seen that I had everything I might possibly need, she kissed and left me.

Long after her light footfall had died away I sat there huddled up on the safe velvet lounge, staring vacantly out of the window, idly watching the leaves as they fell, tossed by the night breeze, on to the moonlit grounds. One day yellow leaf on a branch that waved straight across the casement became detached, and then caught on the stem of another leaf, and hung fluttering there.

I watched its hold gradually grow looser and looser, till finally it floated down, a small golden and red spot, to rest with its sisters, and through my brain was being abounded as by a thousand voices, "Your sister is a murderer, and your lover is accused of the crime!"

Putting my hands to my ears I started up and paced hurriedly to and fro the long apartments, but those demon voices would not be stifled; they shrieked and screamed round me, the air seemed full of them, and going to the window I threw it open, and leaned out. But here the long dark shadows cast by the trees assumed the shapes of goblins, who grinned and beckoned me with their long, shapeless arms, and the shrill, distinct voices of the night, became intelligible to me.

"Will you let your lover die for your sister's crime?" cried one voice.

I shivered and looked round to see from whence it came, but all was still. The great bedstead, with its rich silken hangings stood, grim and stolid in the centre of the room; the wax candles in their crystal brackets burnt brightly, their lights peering into every corner, and outside the moon's light showed only the crooked, moaning shadows on the smooth green sward. Then another gibing voice broke upon my ear.

"Can you give your own sister up to justice?"

"Am I going mad?" I asked myself, pulling my long hair, which the tangled brushwood had torn down from my face. I stared up at the calm, placid, emotionless moon. "Were these really demon voices I heard, or merely the conjuring up of my own fevered brain?"

I turned away from the window, and as I did so caught sight of my face in a glass, opposite me, and I started at the look I saw there. My face was livid, my lips black and dry, and my eyes wide and glittering, with a wild unquiet light. I felt frightened at the sight of my own reflection, and throwing myself down on the bed soon fell into a deep sleep—the long, heavy sleep of exhaustion.

When I awoke it was broad day. A light flood of mellow sunlight poured into my room, catching the long crystal pendants of the chandelier and turning them to a thousand beautiful colours, peering into the glass doors of the cabinets, with their treasures of precious necklaces and old china, playing in merry sport among my long fair hair, as I lay on my bed-cushion, maddened by this awful world that had fallen upon me.

I lay there looking at the birds flitting through the clear sunlight, their tiny throats giving forth such sweet trills of pure music. My window commanded a view of the old lake, where the sun shone so lovingly on the golden and white lilies, and on the tall, graceful reeds of the broad, swift-running river, and of the wood.

The whisper of the pines sounded still in my ears, but there was a difference in their meaning, mournful tones; there was the stain of murder on the soft mossy ground, a tale of horror that the leaves would never tell, and whispering to each other, and with a shudder

huddled my head in the pillow, hiding my face from sight.

"Presently, a soft hand was laid caressingly on my head, and mamma's voice so sweet and low, fell upon my ear in a soothing, restful manner."

"Gundred, my child," she said, pillow my weary head on her bosom; "you have not taken off your dress, even."

"No, mamma, I was weary—oh, so weary!" I whined.

And then I lay passively in those arms, and as I nestled in that tender embrace a wild longing came over me that I might die then and there. The world was one dreary blank. Then I started up, as Dendil's sufferings came before me.

"What is it, dear?" asked mamma, looking anxiously at me as I sat up wide-eyed and tearful. I could feel the hot colour burning my cheeks, and my lips were dry and parched.

"Dendil," I said, hoarsely. "Tell me, mamma, how it happened."

"I know nothing," she replied, "nothing, excepting that Dendil was found in the pine-wood by two gamekeepers, standing over the dead bodies of Lord Carleton and a man unknown, with a pistol still smoking in his hand. That is all I know."

"Where is he?" I shuddered as I put the question.

"He was here in the library all night, but the two policemen who were sent last night took him away this morning," said poor mamma in a scarcely audible voice.

"And Dendil?" I could not bring myself to speak tenderly of her. Knowing that all this disgrace and bitter grief were of her making, how could I?

"She has asked to see you several times, but I thought it would be wiser to wait until you were calm, for she is very ill. I shall send for a doctor if she continues like this," said mamma gravely.

"I wish to see her at once," I cried, rising quickly, and throwing off the additional robe which I had looked so prettily at dinner the night before; and mamma sat there patiently while I looked my hot face and hands and hastily pulled up the heavy mass of hair that my lover had likened to threads of fairy gold, and then when I was ready she put her hand on my shoulder and said—

"Gundred, for my sake, take some refreshment—a cup of chocolate even, before you leave this room."

"Very well, dear," I replied, listlessly. I could not resist her gentle persuading, but I did not care for it; nay, the mere thought of food filled me with loathing, but I drank it, when it was brought, and, in spite of myself, I ate it.

"You would rather see her alone besides, wouldn't you?" said mamma when we reached the door of my sister's room, and so I entered by myself.

A chill like that one feels on entering a chamber of death, crept over me as I walked towards the bed whereon Dendil lay white as marble, and looking, save for the wide-open dark eyes, more like an beautiful effigy carved in stone than a living, breathing woman. Her long black hair strayed over the lace-trimmed pillow, but here and there sunbeams played and gleamed about in laughing golden spots, for the blinds were drawn, and a deathlike stillness reigned.

"Is that you, Gundred?" I said, my sister's voice, but so changed. The rich full tone had gone, leaving in its stead a fever-stricken plaintive note that was pitiful to hear.

"Yes, Dendil," I whispered, putting my hand in hers, and sitting down on the side of the bed.

"Won't you kiss me, Gundred?" He turned from me, and his dying glance was one of reproach. "I have murmured, and in her great eyes wandered round the darkened room. I gazed for a moment that her mind was wandering, but as they met mine, I saw that there was no delusion in that gaze."

"Leave it all, Dendil," I replied, turning my

face to her and keeping her hand tight in mine. "I was in the Pine Wood last night at sunset!"

"You!" she gasped, sitting up in bed, a rich red flushing her face into its own old warm, glowing beauty for a moment, but receding next minute, thus rendering the contrast more pitiful.

"Even I," I replied, quietly. "But tell me, Dendil, what chain this man had upon you?" I urged.

"I have called you here to tell you the history of my deceit and cruel treachery to Frank. You always called me your innocent sister, Dendil."

"There was a world of sad wistfulness in her words; but ere I could speak there came a knock at the door, and Sir Michael Drayton, the head magistrate of the town, was ushered in. I rose and stood before him, speechless with surprise."

"What was he doing here, in my sister's room? What did he want with her? A kind of terror took possession of me, and I walked forward with the intention of telling him that she was too ill to be disturbed, when her voice fell slowly and calmly on the intense stillness."

"I sent for you, Sir Michael, to make a deposition. Will you get pen, ink, and paper, please, Gundred, and then sit down and listen quietly. I—"

A violent spasm of pain seemed to seize her at that moment, for her features contracted, and a livid, awful greyness overspread them.

"What is it, dear?" I cried, all my anger fading before the fear that she was dying, for so she appeared as she lay there panting, and clutching wildly at the air.

But presently she turned to me calmly, quietly as before, but with such a look of pain on the young lovely face that my nerves quivered.

"Tell Sir Michael what you saw in the Pine Wood last evening," she said, with slow, clear distinctness; and he fixed his keen black eyes upon me, waiting with his pen poised in air above a great sheet of pure white paper.

I shuddered as I thought what would be written there presently, for I knew my sister's motive in sending for Sir Michael Drayton; but my tongue refused its office—I could not speak.

How could I sit calmly there, and tell the tale of my sister's heinous crime? And then the afterwards!

The crowded court, my sister in the dock, all eyes turned upon her, the judge drawing on the black cap while he pronounced the last dread sentence of the law, and then the gibbet, dark and grim. All—these were before my eyes as I sat motionless on the edge of the bed, and felt their eyes fixed upon me, and I could not speak!

"Must I speak myself?—be my own executioner? Well, be it so!"

There was the quiet dignity of despair in her tones as she restlessly turned from me and attempted to rise. I helped her by placing a pillow under her head—that beautiful dark head that had always been carried so proudly. Where was her pride now? Crushed, dead! and by her own deed.

Sir Michael had not spoken a word beyond his first question, as to why he was needed; and there he sat, a look of sorrowful intelligence gradually stealing over his stern, handsome face. He evidently guessed that there was no ordinary tale attached to this double murder.

"I will begin at the beginning. When I had been at school about six months, Madame was taken ill, and we girls had more liberty than was our right. I remember one day—it was a lovely clear day in the early spring, and the air was full of the sweet perfume of budding leaves and blossoms. I had gone down to the end of the meadow, adjoining that dear, quaint old garden, and as I stood there wondering if I should turn back and go on to the river, a voice broke the stillness of the spring morning,

and a young man vaulted over the thick edge that divided the meadow from the road.

"Good morning," he said in French, and taking off his hat with a Frenchman's politeness and grace; "you are alone I perceive."

"I did not reply for a moment, but he continued walking by my side, talking in that soft, melodious, treacherous voice of his. I knew by this time that he was English, and the school-girl love of romance was strong within me; so I answered his gracefully-turned speeches with appropriate shyness, and seemed as indeed I was, fascinated with him, and his wonderful tales of travels in the Eastern lands of romance and love. I do not quite know how it was, but when we parted at the garden gate, which was let into the great high brick wall, I had promised to meet him again on the following morning, and so the days passed on, and scarcely one faded into night without my having met the man, who, by this time, I began to term my lover."

About three months after our first meeting he asked me to marry him, and then all at once the fear of what mamma and papa would say to this penniless stranger—for he told me he was poor—overwhelmed me; and I asked him to wait, but he loved me so—whatever his faults he loved me!"

Persis's voice grew very faint, and to my horror I saw a few spots of blood on the lace front of her nightdress; but when I would have moved to get her something to relieve the pain she was evidently suffering she motioned me to be still.

"And so one day I crept out apparently for a stroll in the meadow, but, instead, we went to the little Protestant church and were married; and then I asked Madame's permission to pay a visit to one of my old school-fellows at Versailles, and she, nothing suspecting, gave it. We were happy during those first days. When my holiday was nearly ended I discovered that Gerald Estdale—"

"Estdale!" I repeated.

"Yes, it was your lover's twin brother whom I saw. But listen, the cruel part of my story is to be told. Gerald Estdale, he called himself—Ragorova, was a foreign escaped felon, and I heard afterwards that he murdered his warder. Still, all the tenderness did not die out of my heart, for, as you know, I was his ring with I engaged myself to Lord Carleton. Ah! then I loved you, my darling Frank! Lift me up—Gundred!"

"She had fallen back, gasping and beating the air for breath, and a thin foam gathered round the once beautiful mouth that was now distorted with pain. I bent over her, a great fear stealing round my heart. Although that was not all fear nor all thankfulness flashed through my mind, not all of either, but a strange contradictory commingling of the two."

"Yes, I know what you were thinking. I kept it on those few days to full Gerald's suspicions, for he had followed me home, and sought to meet me over and over again. I have suffered for my deceit; and as she spoke these words she turned her great eyes, gleaming with their old lustre, but with a dusky light in them too, that filled me with dread, full upon me as I sat there, with pale set face, and tightly locked hands. I knew what she meant, and put out my hand and clasped hers. She smiled a weary, yet pleased smile, as she continued—

"I was mad enough to think that in some way I could dissolve that rash marriage—I fancy, perhaps, I could, seeing that he was a felon—with a man whom I now feel I never cared for, save in a careless, romantic, school-girl fashion. But I could not tell you—yet who in the calm, loving voice that will soon be unheeded by me, called me your innocent sister, and so I kept my secret."

"You remember the first night of Dendil's return, I saw, 'We may be happy yet.' He only came to my side to ask who taught me that song. Guilty conscience made me flush. It was a favourite of his dead brother's; he told

me in explanation. Then he was coming to you, but you were talking to Frank. I think he was annoyed, because you looked so indifferent and happy, for he stayed with me. You and Frank were not mistaken that night in the Lime Avenue. I was there, but not with Denzil. It was Gerald whom you saw there with me. I dared not repel his caress, though his very touch had become loathsome to me; and then, as we parted, I saw to my horror, Denzil standing at the end of the terrace.

"He had seen us, for the moonlight streamed down on to the pathway, showing up every object, and then, as I gazed upon the two men, I saw the strange likeness that existed between them. Denzil's voice as he joined me where I stood alone, helpless, dumb, with the horror of discovery, was so like, that it startled me into renewed life."

"Who is that man you have just parted from, Persis? Do you know? Tell me!"

"And I told him all the truth. Gundred, he begged me to tell Frank all then, but I was too cowardly, and I knew that he would not betray me. So I was content revelling in the joy of the moment as the butterflies, knowing even while I laughed and sang that there must come a day of reckoning, and soon."

She paused, and lay back on the lace-trimmed pillow perfectly still. The dark eyes were closed, and the long black lashes rested on the perfect marble-like cheeks. There was no pain on the face now to mar its beauty.

Her long jetty hair strayed round her shoulders and over the pale blue silken coverlet like a dark shining veil, and one loose curling strand was coiled between the quiet pale fingers of her right hand; and I thought, as I gazed upon her as she lay there so lovely, so imperially lovely even now, that thus must Cleopatra have looked as she lay in that last long sleep that something told me was coming slowly, but surely, to this loved, erring sister of mine.

"That night in the wood I met Gerald by appointment, and he was mad with rage, because he had heard of my engagement to Frank, and oh! Heaven forgive me!"

A violent convulsive shudder shook her frame, and the delicate blue-veined hands wandered aimlessly over the bed; then by a violent effort she raised her head, and in a clear low voice that never faltered, spoke the word that cleared my lover's name, and signed her own death-warrant.

"You say that this is all true?" observed Sir Michael, tapping the paper with the end of the ivory penholder. His voice trembled slightly, and he kept his eyes averted. He was one of papa's oldest friends, and I know what this thing was to him. I could not reply, but bowed my head, and taking up a pen helped my sister write her name at the end of that fatal paper, and as I signed my own I felt that somehow I was answerable—that I had signed her death-warrant.

"One thing I have not told you. I have taken poison. Do not look like that, Dreda. It is better so. I could not have faced that hideous gloating crowd, and stood with a brave face while the judge pronounced those horrible words. It will soon be over now."

My first impulse was to rush to the bell-rope to summon aid; but Sir Michael, who appeared utterly unconscious of what my sister had just said, motioned me back.

"Your sister is right. Better let her rest in peace. See, she is beyond our aid even now," he said, gravely, and I understood the significance of his words; better to thus die than to live for that other death.

I turned from the table and looked towards the bed. Persis lay back in the same calm, peaceful attitude of graceful repose as before, but down the white filmy lace and over the delicate satin coverlet ran a tiny red stream that issued from the quivering, froth-flecked lips.

"Oh, Heaven! it is more than I can bear!" I moaned, wringing my hands in impotent agony, for I knew that life for her was impossible, even if a doctor should save her now.

"I will leave you now. I must see Mrs. Sherbourne before I go," said Sir Michael, pressing my hand in his. He passed the other gently over my sister's beautiful head and then left the apartment.

Left alone in that great, silent, luxurious room over which there hung more than the horror of death I stood silent, sorrow-stricken. No words with which to console the weary, stained spirit passing so slowly out of this world of beauty into that which we mortals designate Heaven in a vague belief would come to my lips, though I longed to speak them. It was her voice, low, sad, thrilling with a mighty anguish, that broke the silence.

"Open—the win—dow, Gun—dred, I should like—to—hear—the birds sing—and—"

"Hush, dear," I whispered. It seemed like sacrilege to speak aloud in that room. "I know all you would say."

I kissed her, and then crossed the room and drew the blinds up and threw open the window, letting in a flood of such rich golden light and soft, sweet melody that it seemed like a message of peace from Heaven. Then I went again to her side, and sat listening in mute wonder and sorrowful pleasure to those sounds.

A gentle, balmy breeze, heavy laden with the perfume of the dying summer blossoms, played over our faces, and mingling with the bright cheerful song of birds came the rhythmic low chant of the river, and from afar off the clear distinct chime of church bells, all making one harmonious whole that thrilled and held me spellbound.

Presently my sister opened her large dark eyes that had grown so mistily soft, and by a slight pressure of my hand called my attention to herself.

"What is it, dear?" I asked.

"Gundred, will—he—forgive—me when—we—meet?"

"Persis, he did forgive you!" I cried out.

"You think so?"

For a moment a smile played round her beautiful, but pale lips, then an expression stole over her face so fraught with wild agony that I turned my eyes away; and the soft-singing of the river, and the low clear chiming of the bells swept in in a flood of rich music, and the feathered mites flew merrily from bough to bough in the golden sunlight, while my sister's voice, growing fainter and fainter, strove to make itself heard.

"Frank, Frank! Oh—no—I remember—that look—it was not—one—of forgiveness. Frank,—oh!—my—love for—!"

It was horrible to stand there helpless, utterly helpless, and watch those death agonies. Over the lovely blanched face had come a change that was unmistakably the change of death. The breath came in fitful gasps, the snowy bosom rose, and fell with each throes of agony, and then a thin, swift stream of blood flowed out on the bed, dyeing the clothes scarlet; and a dread stillness in the room, while the joyous sounds of life outside seemed redoubled.

I never knew how things were arranged, how mamma received the news of the fearful truth, how Denzil was released, for I lay on my bed in a darkened chamber for weeks after the day of my sister's death; and when I opened my eyes I saw someone who seemed to bear a resemblance to mamma, but who looked years older, sitting by my side, and then she leant over me, and I recognised that dear face, though the misery in the once bright eyes shocked me; but I was too weak to think much, and giving a faint smile up at her, I turned my head from the light, and fell into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

"Never morning wore

To evening, but some heart did break."

Pure white, glistening, untrodden snow, the tall, dark firs, with their grim, funeral plumes nodding in the crisp, clear air, greeted

my eyes when I took my first walk alone after that time of misery. The Pine Wood, grim and gaunt, rose before me, the long icicles hanging like rich jewels from their straight brown branches.

The whole landscape was flooded with pale, wintry sunshine, and the red breasts of the robins showed brightly against the snowy whiteness as they hopped about in search of food.

A faint feeling of delight stirred my pulses as I drew my fur cloak closely, and walked on. Denzil was coming; he had written to say so, and I had come out here wishing that meeting to take place without witnesses. I paused beside the river, where I had waited so joyously a few months back. But there was no musical murmur springing up, and mingling with the soft sighing of balmy breezes now. The river lay silent, hidden from view by a broad sheet of hard, glittering ice, and the willows bent mournfully over, sighing that they could no longer see their graceful forms reflected in its clear depths.

I leant against the drooping branch of a wide-chested oak, and gazed across that broad undulating stretch of clear glistening snow-clad land. Above the sky was a clear pale blue grey, and on the frosty still air the music of sleigh bells fell with a pleasant sound.

"What would Denzil say?" I wondered. That he would forgive me I never doubted for a moment, but what would he say? I stretched my hands out to the pale sky in an ecstasy of speechless joy that my love would soon be with me. Do not think I grieved the less for my dead friend and dearly-loved sister, but this love was the wellspring of existence—to me it was life!

Suddenly I heard a slight sound, only the snapping of a dry twig, but it told me I was no longer alone, and, turning, I saw him coming towards me down the snow-covered path, his footsteps making a soft crunching noise, as they trod the white purity out of the snow.

As he held me in his arms all the doubt, the pain, the bitter agony of the past months swept over me in a great flood, and I could not speak. Then I looked up into his dear face, into his tender brown eyes, shadowed still with the pain of the past, and all the wild passionate love of my soul cried out in my words,—

"Oh, Denzil, my love, you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, sweet; there is nothing to forgive," he replied, softly, and then he drew my hand through his arm, and we walked on over the white earth, conversing in low, earnest tones, that had in them a quiet gravity born of the lesson we had learned. Denzil's white face troubled me. There was something unusual about him, but I forgot this in the new pleasure of listening to his low, musical, rich voice, as we made plans for that future which we were to spend together—always together. How that thought thrilled me!

"Denzil, am I wicked to feel so happy, when Persis—" I whispered, but he interrupted me ere I could finish.

"Hush, pet, you wicked! Better let her name rest. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.'"

I did not make any reply, but a vague pain stole into my heart, and the morning air grew dull and still. I could not understand that grey pallor on my lover's face, it had such a terrible unreal look.

"Denzil!" I said, laying my hand upon his arm, as we paused at the entrance to the Pine Wood. "Why are you looking—"

I never finished that sentence, for a terrible cry of bitter agony broke from his lips, as he pressed his hand to his heart. Then, throwing both arms up to the sky, he fell forward on his face, a dark, still figure on the whiteness there. With a dull, throbbing fear at my heart, I knelt beside him and lifted his head from the cold earth, but his pale, rigid face was cold as the snow that sprinkled his drooping silver moustache. By a superhuman effort, born of despair, I lifted his head, and put my hand to his heart. Not a beat, not even the faintest

flutter. Then the horrible truth broke upon me—my lover was dead, dead, dead!

This was the only word I could frame as I sat there, gazing dumbly on the awful, calm serenity of that dead face, so grandly beautiful in death, with the dark eyes closed, the firm mouth tightly locked beneath the deep-brown moustache. Then a wild paroxysm of agony swept over me, and I threw my arms round that still, motionless figure, and rained passionate kisses on the cold, unresponsive lips—on the eyes that had looked, only a few moments back, with such tender love into mine, but the lips remained mute, the long, dark, curled lashes never lifted, never would lift again to reveal the pure, noble thoughts that had once dwelt in that beautiful mind.

"My love! dead! It cannot be!" I cried, raising my eyes to the sky, and looking round as though the dark, grim pines would answer, but they only whispered mournfully, lowly, amongst themselves, as the wind rose and swept through them with a low, whining, hissing sound, that died away in a faint wail.

I looked down into my lover's calm, immobile face, and saw that it was wet with tears—my tears; and mechanically I took my handkerchief and wiped them away, as carefully as though my touch would disturb him. It seemed possible that all feeling had fled from the form, all thought from the brain of him who a moment ago was instinct with every emotion that the human heart can thrill to.

The deep baying of a dog aroused me from my trance of despair; and looking up, I saw Denzil's hound, Vicar, licking his master's hand, while he gazed in dumb, animal grief at the pale, set face, which instinct told him was not set in sleep.

"Poor dog!" I murmured, and then a vain, wild hope sprang into life. Suppose this were not death, but only a deathly swoon?

I sprang to my feet, and stooping over the sound, bade him watch; then I flew with the speed of a lapwing over the slippery ground, through the rose-garden, where the delicately perfumed blossoms had given place to thick masses of gleaming snow; over the broad, smooth, snow-covered lawn, nor paused till I sank exhausted, panting with fear and anxiety. I told my story in a few hurried words, and a short time afterwards several men-servants, headed by papa, were following me as I moved swiftly over the hard ground.

When we reached the spot where lay that still figure, with outstretched, clenched hands, and calm, white face, rigid but beautiful, with the serene majesty of death, raised to the high, clear, wintry sky, I felt he was indeed lost to me. The earth around lay like a great white, glistening shroud, and the pines sighed their musical, mournful requiem, as the men stooped and gently lifted that inanimate form on to the shutter they had brought with them.

And so the sad procession passed along, the hound keeping by my side, walking with drooping tail and hanging head, raising his eyes ever and anon to that figure on the shutter, and licking my hand in token of sympathy. The doctor who had been sent for immediately arrived soon after we reached the house.

His verdict only fell with a dull sound on my ears. My love was dead; the wild hope that had come to me died as soon as it was born, and so it was no shock. He was carried to a room on the ground floor, a great, solemn apartment, furnished in ebony and deep red, and they laid the quiet form gently on the immense bedstead and drew the heavy curtains, and left me alone with my dead.

Dead! Yes, it was true, must be true. I gazed round at the darkened window, at the grim, massive furniture, the dark faces of the pictures on the wall, looking out from their heavy frames in solemn gravity. It was a fit chamber for the presence of death, and I shuddered and turned my eyes upon the face of him I had loved and doubted, and who would never know now how I had loved him. He looked like a marble statue as he lay there, the rich red of the hangings throwing up his perfect face like a rare carved cameo.

I sat there for hours gazing at him, one hand resting on his breast, while with the other I now and again brushed his dark chestnut curls. I could not quite bring myself to think him dead, and so no repulsion was over me—none of that natural shrinking from the dead that usually comes when the spark of life flickers and fades, leaving the shell in eternal darkness.

When the shadows of eve fell, filling this great room with an intense gloom, I rose, and pressing a kiss upon the cold, stiff lips, drew the coverlet gently over the grand face and passed out of the room. That was the last I saw of the man who had been more to me than life—who had taken with him to that other world the light of my soul, leaving me enveloped in a great overwhelming darkness.

Many years have come and gone since the events recorded in these pages—years that have taught me faith and patience, and that there is peace and happiness for those who work for others, taking happiness from the thought of doing good. I am still young, and there are those who call me fair, and praise the lustre of the mass of hair which I try in vain to band smoothly beneath the cap that is the badge of the sisterhood to which I belong, but never again will love of man stir my pulses. My heart lies buried in that grave, which I spend hours by, when I go down to visit my relations at Lime Villa.

Both my father and mother are dead, and I am utterly alone in the world. I have learned to think of "my innocent sister," with pity and forgiveness, in these years spent among such scenes of agony, borne with a calm resignation difficult to believe in, if not witnessed; and I feel, when I see the faces of "my children" light up with pleasure, as I move softly down the hospital ward, helping to bind their wounds, and whispering words of encouragement to them, that I have not lived in vain; and has not the poet told us:

"The harvest of love is there!"

[THE END.]

CURIO.—A party leads to an introduction. Then a proposal and engagement. And all this time Cupid has been playing his deadly game with people who have seen each other only in their company manners. When the young couple are face to face with a household care or two—when the fresh-complexioned girl gets pale and wan—when things go awry at the counting-house and there is a wet day at home, company manners fly away. It is never too late to think over it twice while everything has to be done. When all is settled it is too late to begin again at the start.

RELIGION ON THE CONGO.—When the missionary holds a Sunday service in King Kongompa's house some twenty or thirty idlers look in, in a genial way, to see what is going on, much as we might be present at any of their ceremonies. They behave very well, and imitate, with that exact mimicry which only the negro possesses, all our gestures and actions, so that a hasty observer would conclude they were really touched by the service. They kneel down with an abandon of devotion, clasp their hands, and say "Amen" with a deep, ventral enthusiasm. The missionary, on the occasion that I accompanied him, gave a short sermon in Fiole, well expressed, considering the little time that he had been studying the language. The king constantly took up the end of some phrase, and repeated it with patronizing interest after the missionary, just to show how he was attending, throwing meanwhile a furtive glance at his wives, who were not pursuing their vocations outside with sufficient diligence. A short prayer concluded the service, and when the king rose from his knees he promptly demanded the loan of a hand-screw to effect some alteration in his new canoe.—*The River Congo. H. H. Johnstone*

THE FAIR ELAINE.

CHAPTER I.

A PERFECT BEAUTY.

"HAZELHURST, June 30, 18—

"DEAR PHIL,—I promised when we were all at home that I would send for you. We are a gay party, I can tell you—five constitute our number, and we need only your own jolly self to complete the sextet. There is pretty Arley Wentworth, my sister's especial friend and chum; Fred Vane, Annie's fiancé, and last, but not least, aside from your humble servant, my father's charming ward, the Lady Elaine Warburton. What shall I say of her?—how give you an idea of her surpassing loveliness? I will say nothing. I can only quote from our poet-laureate: 'Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable! Elaine the lily-maid,' not of 'Astolat,' but of the house of Mordaunt, and the daughter not 'of a hundred earls' like the 'Lady Clare,' but of the Duke of Mordaunt, who died abroad about five years ago, having first committed his only child to the care of my respected paternal, who was his dearest and most trusted friend. She has been at a convent in France most of the time since her father's death, and I have scarcely seen her since she was a little maid in short clothes; consequently I was wholly unprepared for the vision of loveliness which burst upon my sight, when, on my return from Oxford, I was presented to the peerless Elaine.

"You perceive, old fellow, how it is with me; I have 'gone clean daft.' I see nothing, think of nothing, save a fair, creamy face, with the faintest flush, like that of a sea-shell, on its rounded cheeks; while shining bands of gold span the pure white brow, beneath which eyes of purple-blue seem to be looking at one through a golden mist. Then those dainty lips!—so sweet, so red, that they never part with smile or word but they set my heart on fire. She has a form of faultless symmetry, a hand like a piece of fairest sculptured marble, and a foot which a fairy might envy.

"I said I would not say anything about her, but I've written all this nonsense almost before I knew it. I'm getting decidedly spooney, I'll own, but you will not wonder when you see my 'lily-maid.' Come down at once, and we will have a jolly time next month. You will like Arley Wentworth, who, by the way, is quite an heiress, and just your style—dark, brilliant, bewitching.

"You shall be her cavalier on all occasions. You perceive that I have done the pairing-off, for I warn you beforehand that I shall brook no rival for the affections of my peerless Lily of Mordaunt. I can imagine the curl of amusement, perhaps mingled with something of scorn, on your handsome lips as you read this, *mon ami*. You will remember how indifferent I have always been to the charms of the gentle sex—you will recall my rank scepticism regarding my ever losing my heart to any woman, however lovely; but I can't help it—it's all up with me now, though I doubt if the rack would ever have made me confess as much to anyone else. Telegraph when you will be here, and I will meet you at the station.

"Yours ever,

"WIL."

Philip Paxton, Esq., a young and rising barrister, sat in his chambers in the Temple one hot, dusty day, when all London seemed gasping for breath, so to speak, and read the above effusion; while his lips did indeed curl, but with decided "scorn" rather than "amusement." "I should say he was 'clean daft,'" he muttered; "poor, foolish Wil!"

"And he will 'brook no rival for the affections of the fair Elaine!'" he added, a flash of something like defiance for a moment lighting up his dark eyes.

"Bah!" he continued, "the name is enough for me—I never could endure that love-sick tale, where that poor little fool, Elaine, died for love of Lancelot, and the very sound of it

is a synonym to me of a sort of milk-and-water beauty; and a weak-minded, silly little girl. Now Arley Wentworth," he went on, referring to his friend's letter again, "sounds something like—there is character in it, and, at all events, originality. Let me see, this is Wednesday. I imagine that I can arrange matters and things so that I can run down to Hazelmere on Saturday. I think I've earned a rest," he concluded, with a sigh, while his eyes roved with something of pride over the piles of papers and documents filed so neatly away in the pigeon-hole of his great desk, and telling of long days of hard work and well-earned gold.

He took up his pen, and, drawing a sheet of paper towards him, at once wrote a letter of acceptance to the invitation of his friend, and mentioned Saturday afternoon as the time set for his arrival at Hazelmere, the magnificent country-seat of Sir Anthony Hamilton, a wealthy baronet, who owned half the village of Ashdale in Essex.

Saturday afternoon, when the 4.30 express from London stopped for a moment at the station of Ashdale, a tall, well-proportioned young man of about twenty-five, sprang upon the platform and looked about him as if expecting to see some one whom he knew awaiting him.

There was a stately air about him which at once attracted attention, a certain poise of the handsome head, a look of character and decision about his attractive face, a certain gravity and dignity of manner, and a fire in his dark blue eyes, which impressed the beholder at once with an idea of superiority and power.

And yet, a closer scrutiny of that face by those who were skilful in reading human nature, always engendered a feeling of distrust, as if underneath all that ability, power, and culture there was an element which was likely under certain circumstances to work mischief for both himself and others.

His dress was of finest texture and most fashionable make, yet there was not the least suspicion of the dandy about him; everything was immaculate, yet in perfect taste.

"What have you got, old boy, and how do I am happy," cried a genial voice close at hand, and the next moment his hand was eagerly taken and cheerily shaken by a young man about the same height, but of altogether different build, with a frank, laughing face, clear honest blue eyes, waving auburn hair, and a voice whose heartiness and cordiality rang out like a rich strain of music on the summer air.

This was Wilfrid, one as he was more familiarly called, Wil Hamilton, only son of Sir Anthony, and heir to his title and large estates.

"If you had disappointed me," he began in a gay tone, and still shaking the hand that he held, "I should have given you the cut direct the next time we met. We are all here after you—the three guests attended by Fred and myself. Come this way and I'll introduce you; but, however?—with a mock tragic air—"don't you dare doubt the courtesy of this fair Elaine; or I shall throw my gauntlet at your feet on the spot!" Arley Wentworth, by the way, was anxious to see you; thinks you must be something extra; rather above the common run, you know; for I've rang your presence noisily in her ears;—oh, come! I had an object in view during the last few days."

"Thank you," returned Philip Paxton, in a slightly sarcastic tone, which caused his light-hearted friend to laugh outright.

"There! note of your good-fellowship," said Phil, in good earnest. "You know they never did dish out such a deal of courtesy as you do now. We are all bound for a pleasant time; and if your backbone gets so stiff it will be uncomfortable; not only for yourself, but for the rest of us!"

"Here we are," he added, as they came to the entrance of the station, where three

stood a handsome pair of bays attached to a waggonee, in which two ladies and a gentleman were seated.

"Annie," he said, leading his friend toward them, and addressing a pretty girl with a fair complexion and hazel eyes, "you do not need to be introduced to Phil, but you shall give him a glimpse of welcome before I present the others. Mr. Vane, this is my friend, Mr. Paxton; Miss Wentworth, Mr. Paxton."

Mr. Paxton, after greeting Annie Hamilton, shook hands with Mr. Vane, and lifted his hat to Miss Wentworth, and was instantly impressed that she was a "mighty pretty girl."

Then he glanced about him with some curiosity, wondering where the "fair Elaine" could be.

Wil Hamilton noticed it, and coloured slightly.

"Come this way a moment, Phil, and I'll finish all the introductions at once," he said; and slipping his arm within that of his friend, he turned him about and led him toward an elegant phaeton, to which two pretty grey ponies were attached, and in which a slight, graceful girl was seated.

"I could not drive any nearer, for the ponies are a trifle skittish," Wil explained, as he led him forward.

"Good heavens! how beautiful she is!" the young man said to himself when at last they stood beside the phaeton; and he never could remember afterwards how he conducted himself during the ceremony of introduction.

"The Lily of Mordant," he repeated to himself, as he gazed upon her exquisite loveliness, and, for the moment, was oblivious of everything else.

He was conscious only of looking into eyes of liquid blue—eyes which seemed to him to have fathomless depths; and through which some sweet spirit was gazing up at him, thrilling his very soul with a strange delight.

He saw a fair, low brow, over which rings of sunny hair lay in careless grace; a delicate mouth, proud, yet sweet; sensitive, yet strong. He noticed the delicacy, fairness of her skin, upon which there was not the slightest blemish; the small ears, which seemed like moulded wax, and the rich, heavy coils of golden hair, which shone like bands of smoothed satin. He saw, too, the slight, perfect, yet stately figure, with its beautifully fitting dress of russet brown; the small hand so daintily gloved; the soft, rushing and curling hair white throat, and which was fastened beneath her faultlessly rounded chin with some costly and curiously carved stone.

He took in every detail of her toilet—all her exquisite loveliness in those few brief moments, during which he stood bowing before her, and exchanged polite greetings.

"She is like the matchless Catha Lily," he said to himself, "as pure, as stately, as perfect. I do not wonder now at Wil's rhapsodies, or that he lost his heart when he saw her. But I wish her name was not Elaine—I never liked it; though if the Lily-maid of Astol was one-half as fair, I doubt if Queen Gamewere, even though she were called the 'pearl of beauty,' could hold a candle to her—to quote a common phrase; and Lancelot, that flower of chivalry, made the greatest mistake of his life when he turned the cold shoulder to her pleading. Who could look upon such beauty unmoved? It is not in human nature."

But he was suddenly recalled from his musings by the sweetest voice in the world.

"Mr. Paxton will make our circle complete," Lady Elaine said, turning with a smile, and a slight blush, from his admiring eyes to speak to Wil.

That smile disclosed the prettiest teeth—small, white, even; and in vivid contrast to the sweet, scarlet lips.

Philip Paxton bowed his appreciation of this compliment, and a deeper colour tinged his own cheek.

"Yes," Wil Hamilton answered, "we shall make a capital party, and now Phil, if you'll take a seat in the waggonee with Mrs.

Wentworth, I'll have your postman call to see to, and then we'll be off for Hazelmere, where we shall doubtless find dinner waiting."

Philip lifted his hat to Lady Elaine, and turned away to comply with his friend's request.

But he was loth to go; and his eyes lingered anxiously upon the vacant seat by her side.

How like a poem it would have been to be able to drive those spirited ponies to Hazelmere, with that peerless face so near, and that sweet voice making music in his ears.

But he was, of course, obliged to submit to the arrangements already made; and, springing to his post by Miss Wentworth's side, they were soon trotting along at a spanking pace over the beautiful country, while before they had accomplished half the distance to Hazelmere, his admiration was turned into a new channel, and he was compelled to confess that Wil had certainly given him no "milk-and-water" beauty for a companion; for Miss Arley Wentworth proved herself to be both brilliant and interesting.

Half-an-hour's drive brought them to Hazelmere's hospitable doors, where a cordial reception was accorded to the new-comers by Sir Anthony Hamilton and his genial, motherly wife; and the gay party separated to dress for dinner, which would soon be served.

"I will give you just twenty minutes, young ladies, so bestir yourselves," Lady Elaine said, playfully, as the three girls came trooping into the hall. "If you cannot make yourselves pretty enough in that time, you will have to suffer the consequences."

"What do you think of my 'Lily of Mordant'?" Wil asked of Philip, as he went to show him the room which had been prepared for him.

"You're 'Lily of Mordant!'" he repeated, with a keen glance at the young man's face; "do you claim possession already?"

Wil flushed.

"Well," he said, with a laugh, "I suppose I have no right to do that; but, between you and me, I hope it will some time be long. I shan't love it?"

"Very; and your name for her is very appropriate; but Miss Wentworth is exceedingly beautiful, too," Philip answered.

"Yes. Arley is very brilliant, and a fascinating little thing; besides, she has twenty thousand pounds in her own right."

"That is a sum little sum; to be sure; but I suppose, Lady Elaine is very wealthy, isn't it?" Philip remarked, with a side glance at his friend.

"Yes; the Duke of Mordant left her immense property—the income, I believe, is about as much as Arley's whole fortune."

"Indeed?" Mr. Paxton said, with peculiar emphasis. "You will be a lucky fellow, Wil, if you succeed in winning her peerless ladyship and her immense fortune also."

"I have scarcely thought of the money," Wil Hamilton replied, eagerly, and flushed hotly. "She would be just the same to me if she hadn't a penny."

"Nevertheless a plethoric purse is a very convenient thing to possess in the long run," quoth Philip Paxton dryly.

"Twenty thousand a year!" he repeated meditatively to himself, after Wil had gone below. "How would a man feel? I wonder if he would be the handier of that amount; to say nothing of the privilege of sitting with such a beauty as Lady Elaine Warburton."

CHAPTER II.

"WHICH IS THE MORE LOVELY?"

A FEW words more of introduction are necessary in order to make the reader understand more thoroughly what the main characters of our story are like.

Arley Wentworth, like the Lady Elaine, was an orphan. Her father had become a captain in the Hussars; and his only child, the daughter of a wealthy London physician, both had died in the far East; the

from a bullet wound received with his face to the enemy, his gentle, idolizing wife from grief over her husband's untimely and tragic death.

The little Arley, then not quite two years old, was thus left desolate, save for the native nurse who had had the care of her ever since her birth—and the officers in her father's company, not knowing what else to do, sent her home to England to her grandfather. The nurse, who loved her little charge most fondly, and could not endure the thought of separation, was only too glad to be commissioned to take care of her.

But the poor little waif nearly lost her life also, for the vessel was wrecked during the voyage; the nurse was drowned, and the child was picked up more dead than alive by a kind-hearted sailor, who saw her drifting helplessly about, and could not leave her to the mercy of the cruel waves, even though his own chances for being rescued were small.

When he, with the few others who were saved, were transferred from the sinking wreck to another homeward-bound steamer, a good woman took the poor child and cared for her with all the tenderness of a mother until she saw her safe in the care of her grandfather, Dr. Hugh McAllister, of London.

He was nearly heartbroken over the sad tidings brought to him by his grandchild, but as she grew and developed, she gradually came to take the place of his lost daughter, and he bestowed the greatest care upon her education and training.

She was a great comfort to him as long as he lived, and at his death he left her all his property, and confided her to the guardianship of his sister, a maiden lady, a number of years younger than himself.

So she was quite an heiress in her own right, beside having expectations of more, since Miss McAllister was also quite wealthy.

She was vivacious and beautiful, as well as very intelligent, consequently she was much sought after, and became the life of the company wherever she went.

Her name, Arley, was simply a contraction of Arietta, which everybody seemed to dislike to speak, and wondered that her parents should have chosen such a strange cognomen for her.

Her features were regular, with a sort of rounded symmetry that made one long to kiss the smooth, bright cheeks, and the full, ripe lips. Her eyes were large, very dark, almost black, and exceedingly expressive. Her hair, of glossy nut-brown, was always arranged in some becoming style, and her smile, so bright and winning, made others smile in sympathy.

She was not so tall or symmetrical in figure as the Lady Elaine, but it was a pretty form, nevertheless, and always clad in the most fancy and tasteful of costumes.

Her voice was rich and full; and her laugh, who can describe it?—clear and sweet as a bell, and musical as the carol of a bird.

At least so thought Philip Paxton—in spite of his remembrance of the Lady Elaine's—as he sat by her side during the drive from Ashdale Station to Hazlemere; and when at length they reached Sir Anthony Hamilton's mansion, and he assisted his charming companion to alight from the waggette, he hardly knew whether he preferred the stately and more delicate loveliness of Elaine, or the bright, bewitching beauty of Arley Wentworth. But when he heard the difference in their fortunes, it was quite evident which way his preference turned.

Annie Hamilton was a sweet, gentle girl, very quiet and somewhat retiring, with no pretensions to beauty, but with a latent something about her—a certain charm which made everybody love her.

She was two years younger than her brother, who was twenty-one, and whom she loved with almost idolatrous affection. She assumed rather mature for her years, but this was owing to her quiet demeanour, and to the fact, perhaps, that she had been brought up almost alone, there being no companions of her own age in the neighbourhood.

Fred Vane, her betrothed, had, like Philip,

been educated for the bar, but having a handsome fortune in prospect, and being the only child of his parents, he had, at their request, remained at home to assist in the management of their large estate.

He, like Annie, was very quiet in his tastes, and they were a couple of very matter-of-fact lovers, who bade fair to enjoy a life full of peace and comfort.

Wil Hamilton was a noble son of a noble father. His clear, honest blue eyes never faltered before the gaze of anyone; his face was as frank and open as the day; his manner possessed a heartiness which went straight to everybody's heart, while his own was as tender and generous as that of a woman. He was one to win everywhere. "Truth and honour" were the watchwords of his life, and every one who knew him respected and loved him, while at Hazlemere he was the idol of the household.

When the company were all assembled around the hospitable board of St. Anthony, it would have been hard to find a more charming group in all England, and the genial face of the baronet fairly shone with pleasure and content as he looked around upon his guests.

Between Arley Wentworth and Lady Elaine a strong and almost unaccountable attachment had seemed to spring up during their short acquaintance of only two weeks.

Both were extremely beautiful, yet neither, as is often the case, appeared to have the slightest feeling of jealousy towards the other. Their style was entirely different, and they were excellent foils for each other; yet their hearts seemed to be in perfect harmony, and to-day, as they sat side by side, it was a joy to look upon them. Lady Elaine, in her robe of delicate blue silk, with its rich and dainty laces, a bunch of blush-rose in her belt, and a single lovely bud nestling in the coils of her shining hair, seemed almost too perfect a piece of humanity for this world; while Arley, with her charming colour, her bright, gleaming eyes, and coral lips, her dress of pale rose under black Spanish net, and a cluster of snow-balls on her bosom, was absolutely radiant.

"I declare! I do not know which is the more lovely," exclaimed Philip Paxton, mentally, as he sat opposite and compared the two. "Little Miss Wentworth is positively charming; she ripples, and sparkles, and fairly dazzles me; while Lady Elaine—her name seemed to grow sweeter to him every time he uttered it, partaking, no doubt, of the nature of its owner—"is like some beautiful saint; and"—a gleam that was not altogether pleasant shot into his eyes as they rested upon the object of his thoughts—"and, with her title and fortune, is, of course, the most tempting bait. I rather think the scales will tip in her favour."

Now Philip Paxton was not, naturally, a bad man, nor a mercenary man.

He had been brought up well, taught to be honourable in all his dealings, to reverence truth, and to despise all meanness.

But he had reached a stage on life's journey, as almost every one does, where his future career was balanced on a pivot, as it were, when it would take but very little to turn it either way—towards honour and fidelity on the one hand, or towards dishonour, selfishness, and perhaps crime, on the other.

It was the stage of temptation.

Would he stand or fall? Would he win his life for a woman and her gold, or would he prove true to a mother's teaching, and himself?

Had he met Arley Wentworth alone, had there been no other temptation near, doubtless he would have loved her, married her, and continued to adore her all his life, making her the tenderest and best of husbands; for there was something about her bright ways, her ready wit and repartee, which fascinated him, and stirred his heart with a warmer, deeper sentiment than the more calm and stately manner of Lady Elaine seemed to do.

But here was the daughter of a duke, with her long line of noted ancestors, with her im-

mense fortune, the handling of which a prince might delight in, not to mention her exceeding beauty and grace.

It was a test, and no light one either, especially as, until this hour, he had been "heart-whole and fancy-free;" while at the same time a spirit of antagonism had been aroused within him by Wil's letter, which had told him that he must not so much as lift his eyes to her; that she was to be appropriated by him, and he would tolerate no trespassing upon his ground.

This of itself was sufficient to touch his pride and hurt his vanity; and as he sat there opposite the lovely girl and thought of it, he said within himself,—

"We will see if Wil's influence is all powerful; it might do him good to have a little of the conceit taken out of him."

So, half in the spirit of mischief, half in earnest, Philip Paxton resolved to "cut him out" if he could.

When dinner was over, and the gentlemen had rejoined the ladies, Lady Hamilton called her son aside to arrange for the next day's amusement, and Philip, seizing the opportunity, sought Lady Elaine, and engaged her in conversation.

He was an entertaining talker, and soon succeeded in fastening their attention wholly upon himself, and when at length Wil returned to the drawing-room he found that his friend had coaxed his "lady fair" out through one of the long windows, and there the handsome couple were pacing backwards and forwards on the ivy-covered porch, which ran along the end of the drawing-room and the library, and were apparently oblivious of everything and everybody save themselves and the subject they were discussing.

A quick, hot flush mounted to the young man's brow, and a pained, anxious look stole into his eyes, for he had surrendered himself entirely, and with a devotion rarely equalled to his father's young and beautiful ward, and he had begun to hope from several little signs that she was not indifferent to him.

"My goodness! I do not like this sudden monopoly at all," he murmured, with rusty lips. "I love you—how I love you! and unless I win you my whole life will be ruined."

Fred Vane and his sister were sitting in a deep window having a cosy, after-dinner chat, and had not even heeded his entrance. Sir Anthony was reading his newspaper, and Arley was nowhere visible.

Wil thought he would look her up, and stole softly out of the room, feeling very wretched, and with the first bitterness which he had ever experienced for his old chum rising in his heart.

He found Arley in the library writing a letter, and sitting just where she could see that distinguished looking couple outside, pacing up and down in the shade of the ivy vines.

Her eyes were unusually bright, and her colour considerably heightened, but she looked up with her own charming smile as Wil entered.

He begged pardon for intruding when he saw that she was writing, but she said,—

"Come in, do; I am only just scribbling a little note to auntie. I am all through except writing the address; and then, if you are agreeable, we'll take a stroll down to the lake; you know that is my favourite resort; for"—with a droll look—"I found myself decidedly drowsy in the drawing-room. Perhaps, however, the others will like to come with us; if they are not too deeply engaged," she concluded, with a slight shrug of her pretty shoulders and an inclination of her bright head towards the porch.

Wil assented to her proposal, and, having waited for her to address and seal her letter, they wandered out.

As they passed through the hall Arley caught up a tiny white scarf and twisted it carelessly about her head, and the contrast with her bright complexion and her rich dress made the loveliest picture imaginable.

"Come, Annie," she sang out, gaily, peeping

in at the drawing-room door; "we are going down to the lake for a row." Then, with a glance at her companion, she added: "Will you ask Mr. Paxton and Lady Elaine to come with us?"

Wil started and flushed hotly at the question, and she read his heart in an instant.

"He loves her, as I suspected, and he is afraid of losing her," she thought.

She bent her head in reflection a moment, then lifting it with a haughty, resolute gesture, she said,—

"I'll ask them," and darted away to suit the action to the word.

"I don't care what Mr. Paxton thinks of me," she murmured, as she went, "he shall not spoil Wil's life with his arts; he loves Lady Elaine, and he shall win her if I can help him to do it, for they were just made for each other."

She stole softly up the steps of the porch, which at that end was beautifully arched above with massive carved pillars on each side.

Philip Paxton and his companion were pacing the other way, and their backs were towards her—they were not even conscious of the approach of any one.

"The Lily of Mordaunt is wanted," she called out, gaily. "Come, Mr. Paxton, we are all going for a row on the lake, and if you have never seen that charming sheet of water you do not know what a treat it is in store for you."

They turned at the sound of her voice, and Philip caught his breath as he looked down the length of the porch and saw the lovely vision standing in the arch; it was as if the young girl had been painted there by some master-hand and then framed within that massive carving.

"Heavens! I never saw any one so beautiful," he thought; and the fairer beauty of the girl at his side seemed to pale before the bright vision before him.

Lady Elaine came forward at Arley's call, as if glad to be released from her *l'été-d'été*.

"Please do not call me by that sentimental name, Arley," she said, with a smile, but with a rising flush.

"Why not, dear? Wil gave you the name, and it just suits you," she replied, linking her arm in hers and drawing her down the steps. "You always make me think of a lily whenever I look at you."

"But you make me feel foolish, you bright Rose of Wentworth," Lady Elaine returned, with an arch smile.

Arley's laugh pealed out rich and clear.

"Now that is just delightful of you, my lady; nobody ever called me anything so pretty before. Do I make you think of a rose?"

"Indeed you do—the brightest rose that ever grew; isn't it true, Mr. Paxton?" Lady Elaine inquired, appealing to him.

"Yes, indeed; it was a happy inspiration, and I think we must adopt it in the future," he replied, with a look in his handsome eyes that made Arley's heart beat quickly in spite of her previous irritation, and the little piece of treachery which she had been plotting to thwart his plans regarding the great heiress and her fortune.

When they came up with the others, Wil appeared thoughtful, and his usually frank eyes were clouded with a look of pain.

"We have found a new name for Miss Wentworth," Philip said, pretending not to notice the change in his friend, although his conscience gave him a twinge; "we are going to call her the 'Wentworth Rose.' What do you think of it?"

"That it is very appropriate," Wil tried to say with his usual hearty manner.

"Then henceforth we will fight for the Wentworth Rose; her champions we will be," Philip said, gaily, and making a low obeisance before Arley.

"Thank you, Mr. Ashton; but I am afraid I shall be spoiled, for I have not been in the habit of having such pretty things said to me," she returned, demurely, but with very mischievous

eyes. "However," she added, "if you take such rash vows upon yourself, you must abide by the consequences; I shall require you to wear my colours."

She plucked a crimson rose from a bush near which they were standing, and held it out to him.

"A serious requirement, indeed," he answered, smiling; "but I shall be most happy to accede to it, if your own fair fingers will place it where it ought to go," and he touched the left lapel of his coat.

Arley began to look for a pin; then, as if suddenly remembering the object of their stroll, she shot a quick glance over her shoulder at Wil, saying,—

"I suppose I must comply with Mr. Paxton's request; go on, Wil, and get the boat ready, and we will be there by the time you want to start."

Wil Hamilton's eye lighted, for he understood the manoeuvre of the bright girl, and stepping to Lady Elaine's side, they all passed on, somewhat to Philip Paxton's chagrin, for he had intended to monopolize the heiress of Mordaunt during the remainder of the evening.

But there was no help for it, since he had bound his own hands, so to speak, and he was obliged to stand there and allow Miss Wentworth to amuse herself at his expense. She appeared to be in no hurry either, and it took some time to settle that rose to suit her capricious fancy.

"I trust you have a plentiful supply of patience, Mr. Paxton," she said, with provoking coolness, as, for the fourth time, she removed the refractory pin, to "try again."

"There!" she added; "I think that will do this time; and now I am afraid that we have kept the others waiting. But I always like to have everything just right," she concluded, with a double meaning to her words, but looking so sweetly innocent that he never suspected how she had contrived to spoil his little game, although he inwardly rebelled against being separated from Lady Elaine.

When they arrived at the lake, they found the rest of the party seated in the boat, waiting for them.

Annie Hamilton was sitting in the prow, Wil and Lady Elaine in the next seat, looking as contented as possible with each other's society, while Fred Vane was in the middle of the boat, with an oar in each hand; thus the two seats at the stern were reserved for the loiterers.

"I am going to row, Paxton, and you will oblige me if you will take the tiller," Fred Vane said, and Philip, after assisting Arley to her seat, could only comply with his request.

But he did not have a very unsocial time of it, in spite of his disappointment, for the "Wentworth Rose" was in the best of spirits, for some reason, and kept his attention so perfectly occupied with her mirth and chatter, that he almost forgot that he had been balked in any of his designs, while Wil was as grateful to the quick-witted girl as ever a forlorn lover could be.

CHAPTER III.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

A WEEK slipped by on magical wings.

Some delightful excursion, drive or entertainment was planned for every day, and the guests of Sir Anthony and Lady Hamilton were indeed a "gay party," as Wil had prophesied they would be.

Had it not been for the two that were playing at cross-purposes there would have been nothing to mar the delight of any one.

If Arley Wentworth had only been Lady Elaine, with her title and twenty thousand a-year, or if her position and fortune had been equal to hers, Philip Paxton would have bowed on worshiping knees at her shrine before that week was over.

He was bewitched and fascinated by her—she acquired a power over him such as no one had ever won before; he never heard her voice

without a thrill—she never came near him without his pulses leaped; the very sound of her light laugh and step—the rustle even of her dress was music to him.

But, alas! he had decreed that it would be folly for him to pass by the greater prize for the sake of a little love; he was ambitious for a brilliant future which fortune and position would at once secure for him, and he could not afford to sacrifice it for the sake of a foolish sentiment, which, at the most, could only give him a little more domestic happiness; and, perhaps, after all, he might learn to love Lady Elaine just as well if he should marry her; and he had made up his mind to accomplish this if possible, notwithstanding the confidential confession of his friend, and the wrong that he would thus do him.

"Wil is certain to be a rich man any way—he will inherit all his father's large property, and it would not be fair for him to have two such fortunes, while it is only by my wits and the hardest work that I am making my way along in the world."

Thus he reasoned the matter with himself, shutting his eyes to the fact that he was betraying the confidence of his friend, using him dishonourably, and doing violence to the nobler feelings of his own nature.

But he did not progress very rapidly in his undertaking, for, just as he would succeed in getting Lady Elaine nicely to himself, and perhaps, right in the middle of a fine speech, something would be sure to interrupt them and break up their *l'été-d'été*.

But he never suspected that there was any "malice prepense" about it, or that Arley Wentworth was thwarting him in every possible way—that she was employing all her arts, and making herself so delightfully agreeable to him whenever the opportunity offered, just for the sake of keeping him from poaching on forbidden ground, and thus giving Wil the desire of his heart.

But it was so, nevertheless; she watched them unceasingly, and if she saw Philip about to seek Lady Elaine, she would instantly dart up to him, in her bright, bewitching way, upon some pretence or other, claim his attention, and draw him into conversation or some playful controversy, until Wil could capture his lady-love, then, laughing in her sleeve over her success, yet with a strange pain gradually creeping into her heart, she would suddenly remember some engagement, work, or errand, and slip away again, leaving him to his own devices.

But sometimes she was not quick enough to accomplish her object, and then Wil's pained face and depressed appearance would haunt her for hours, while she believed she could detect a shade of annoyance on Lady Elaine's sweet countenance, and a wistful look in her eyes.

"What is your opinion of Mr. Paxton?" she asked her one day, when, having dressed earlier than usual, she ran into her room to have a half-hour's chat before dinner.

"I think he is very agreeable and intelligent," Lady Elaine quietly replied.

"Yes—a trifle superior—a little above the generality of young men, isn't he?" Arley asked, with peculiar emphasis, and a covert glance at the fair face opposite her.

A delicate flush rose to the creamy cheek, and the lovely blue eyes were hidden beneath their white lids.

"Is he?" queried Lady Elaine, with an assumption of cool indifference that amused Arley exceedingly.

"I asked you to pass judgment upon him; but if you want my opinion of him I suppose I can give it, and of the other young gentlemen of our party too," she retorted, with a wicked gleam in her dark eyes. "I think he is very handsome. You seldom see such magnificent eyes in anybody; and he has such a finely shaped head, so square and well-developed. Then look at the life and energy in his every movement. Why, if Fred Vane had one half as much, what a man he would make with his opportunities! Then he—Mr. Paxton, I mean

—is so cultivated and entertaining, he must have improved his time well while at Oxford; while as for Wil—

"She hesitated purposely, and the sly puss got just the reward that she had been seeking."

"I'm sure, Arley, you are very unfair in your criticisms, especially when you are a guest in the house of Wil Hamilton. You should not draw odious comparisons," Lady Elaine said, with a sudden flash of spirit, her eyes gleaming and darkening, until they looked like two purple, starry-hearted pansies, while a vivid spot of red burned on each cheek.

"Odious comparisons!" Arley repeated, dropping her lids to bide the dancing sprite in her own eyes. I don't think I've said anything very bad. I was merely expressing my admiration for the recent addition to our party, and—don't you know? I was expected to admire him; for, if you remember, Wil took special pains to impress his superiority upon me long before his arrival, and I'm sure I do not wish to be unappreciative or to disappoint anybody."

"But you need not depreciate others for the sake of lauding him. Wil Hamilton, of all others, least deserves it," interrupted Lady Elaine, with a heightened colour.

"I depreciate Wil Hamilton!" cried mischievous Arley, with well-assumed astonishment. "My dear Elaine, you misunderstand me entirely—indeed you did not even allow me to finish what I was going to say about him."

"What were you going to say?" the fair girl asked, with a searching look at her friend's dimpling face, and then dropping her tell-tale eyes.

"I was going to remark that, as for Wil, there was no use drawing any comparisons, for—he is without a peer in my estimation."

A little smile of pleasure flitted over Lady Elaine's sweet lips, the waxen lids fluttered over her downcast eyes, while a vivid blush suffused her fair face, burning up into the waves of golden hair above her forehead, and creeping down among the folds of snowy lace about her white throat.

Arley, observing it, laughed outright and clapped her dimpled hands with glee at these signs of the state of her friend's heart. Then leaning suddenly forward she kissed her on her forehead.

"My beautiful 'Lily of Mordaunt,' you are a darling," she said. "You are pure and true to your heart's core; you are loyal and brave, and if I am ever in need of a friend I know that you will not fail me."

How vividly she recalled that assertion two years later!

(To be continued.)

SIMPLICITY OF FOOD.—Salt, sugar, spices and luxurious cookery tempt to excess. With men, as with animals, a natural diet is self-limited, and we are disposed to stop when we have eaten enough. The more artificial the food, the more elaborate and luxurious the feast, the more liability to overload the stomach, overtask the digestive powers and overweigh the forces of life. Simplicity of food is a condition of health, and promotes longevity. The quantity of food which enables a man to do his daily work without loss of weight is precisely what he requires. He supplies the daily waste—no more and no less. This quantity may vary a little with each individual, but every one can easily ascertain his own measure of requirement by reducing the quantity of daily food until he finds a balance of force and weight. It is my opinion that the average quantity of water free aliment requires, say by business and literary men, is twelve ounces. Men of great muscular activity may require sixteen to twenty ounces. I have found myself in very good condition for sedentary work on eight or ten ounces. When any one who is in good condition for his work keeps his normal weight he has found food enough.

SOCIAL AMBITION.

Our social ambition is often silly and mischievous. Our young people despise the occupations which involve physical effort or dirt, and they struggle "up"—as we have agreed, to call it—into all the nondescript and irregular employments which are clean and genteel.

Our orators and poets talk about the "dignity of labour," and neither they nor we believe in it.

Leisure, not labour, is dignified. Nearly all of us have to sacrifice our dignity and labour, and it would be to the purpose if, instead of declamation about dignity, we should learn to respect, in ourselves and each other, work which is good of its kind, no matter what the kind is. To spoil a good shoemaker in order to make a bad parson is surely not going "up," and a man who digs well is by all sound criteria superior to the man who writes ill.

Everybody who talks to our schoolboys thinks that he does them and his country service if he reminds them that each one of them has a chance to be Prime Minister of England, and our literature is all the time stimulating the same kind of social ambition, instead of inculcating the code and the standards which should be adopted by orderly, sober and useful citizens.

The consequences of the observations which have now being grouped together are familiar to us all.

Population tends from the country to the city. Mechanical and technical occupations are abandoned, and those occupations which are easy and genteel are overcrowded.

Of course, the persons in question must be allowed to take their own choice and seek their own happiness in their own way, but it is inevitable that thousands of them should be disappointed and suffer.

If the young men abandon farms and trades to become clerks, book-keepers, etc., the consequence will be that the remuneration of the crowded occupations will fall, and that of the neglected occupations will rise.

If the young women refuse to do housework and go into shops, stores, telegraph offices, schools, etc., the wages of the crowded occupations will fall, while those of domestic servants will advance.

If women, in seeking occupation, try to gain admission to some business like telegraphing, in competition with men, they will bid under the men.

Similar effects would be produced if a leisure class in an old country should be compelled, by some social convulsion, to support themselves.

They would run down the compensation for labour in the few occupations which they could enter.

A GOOD DOG.

THE name of Mrs. Richard Burton has often been heard in connection with the prevention of cruelty to animals in Italy and Austria, where she has the opportunity of doing this good work on account of her husband, Captain Burton, being British Consul at Trieste, which is the Austrian seaport.

The landlord of the inn above Trieste had a dog of nondescript breed, but with a great deal of sense and a grateful heart, and he attached himself very warmly to the English lady and gentleman, whom he recognized as friends of his race.

The landlord, who was probably aware that too much meat is not good for dogs, used to be in the habit of shutting him up on Sundays, lest he should go from table to table, and be overfed by the visitors.

Mrs. Burton tried to mitigate this hardship by saving her own scraps and taking them to the dog, that he might not think himself forsaken, and he quite understood her kind motive.

Now, it happened one week that Captain Burton was taken ill at this mountain inn, and was obliged to remain for three whole

days in bed. His four-footed friend knew and interpreted it after his own fashion, and the method of his dogish reasoning was this, "I used to be shut up so that I might not have any meat, and Captain Burton is now being treated just the same." So, when his master threw him a piece of meat, he did not eat it, though he took it in his teeth, and growled ferociously if any one offered to come near him.

By-and-by, when he saw the way clear, he took the food in his mouth and trotted off to his friend's bed-room door, where he sat very patiently till some one opened it in order to come out. This was the dog's opportunity, and he rushed in, jumped on the bed, laid the meat down within reach of his mouth, licked his hand, and trotted quietly away again.

His meaning could scarcely have been clearer if he had been able to talk, and you will not be surprised to hear that his friends adopted him as one of their own circle; and, having so good a master and mistress, he is now one of the happiest dogs in the world.

SOME interesting relics of bygone sea-fights have been discovered at the bottom of the Mediterranean off the coast opposite Gibraltar—from eighty to one hundred large guns, mostly 24 and 32-pounders. Apparently the guns belonged to some large line-of-battle ship which sank in one of the old battles, possibly after Trafalgar, but their nationality is unknown, as there is no suitable apparatus at Gibraltar for raising the pieces.

A CURIOUS historical procession will be organized in Belgium next August during the fifties commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of railways into the country. The procession will represent 'all known means of transport, from the ancient Roman chariot to the modern electric railway, and will include the engine and carriages of the first train which ran in Belgium in 1834, manned by those officials and workmen engaged on the line who still survive.

AT WORK.—The girls of other lands have their work to do. They were not made to exist as lay figures. The Turkistan and on the Tartar Steppes the Kirghese sultanas and their daughters, and princesses in whose veins flows the blood of long lines of kings, still milk the sheep, cows, and goats, and perform the menial offices of the household, as the Sanscrit maidens did six thousand years ago in the same localities. They cook, take care of the younger children, make garments, cure the skins of wild fowl with the feathers on for caps, spin cotton, weave cloth, and tan leather by means of sour milk. In this delectable region the mother wears rich attire, while the daughter goes in humbler weeds, like Cinderella. If there is a piano, the mother plays on it in the front room of the tent, while the daughter brews the *koumiss*, stews the mutton, and broils the camel chops out in the back kitchen. This is the benighted condition of patriarchal people who adhere to a nearly obsolete theory of filial duty. Similar ideas prevail throughout India, China, and among the native tribes of Siberia, who have been driven northward by aggressive neighbours. The Turgusian girls gather the snow, melt it, make the tea and the fish soup, sew, and, being skilful in archery, help to keep the larder supplied with game. The Yakut and Samoyede maidens, and all those who dwell along the Arctic Ocean, help in summer to lay up winter supplies, and in winter to perform all necessary domestic duties. The Abyssinian girl grinds corn in the simple mills in use in that country. The Caffre girl weaves baskets and draws water. The girls in other parts of the Dark Continent pulverise the grain, weave mats, make earthen vessels, and are the hatters of their tribes. The theories of the tribes and nations of Asia and Africa are shared by the Indians of North America, who compel the young girls to learn the duties and hardships of life at an early age.

FACETIE.

A man who imagined that he was unobserved was seen recently patting a pump on the back in the most affectionate manner.

"Here, three days," remarked a street urchin, as he picked up the stub of a cigar and put it away as it, "begin where grown people leave off."

An Indian prince has had a throne made of solid glass. It will now be possible to see the power behind the throne without any trouble at all.

"So Miss Shippo and Mr. Limes are to get married." Well, I declare that aged couple! And she is old enough to be his mother!

The paper says how women are paid a few pence for making a shirt, and the papers speak of it as a outrage. Yet there is a woman we have heard of, who not only doesn't get a farthing for making a shirt, but thinks herself mighty happy if her husband doesn't swear like apostles the way it fits.

"And so, my dear Miss Singleton, you never married?" "No, dear, I did not; I came very near it, however. My six sisters married within five years, and I went through every engagement without a vision; even in the most desperate battles, you know, in the most terrible massacres, there is always one who escapes to tell the tale."

"My darling, you do not bestow on me so much affection as you did before we were married," remarked a pouting bride of four years to her husband. "Don't I?" he replied.

"No, Charles, you don't; you pay very little attention to me," said his wife. "Well, my dear," observed the wicked husband, "did you ever see a man run after me, after he had assailed me?"

There was a young man who once declined a pressing invitation to favour a select company with a song. "Oh, really you must excuse me," he said. "I tell you I can't sing. I don't come of a singing family. Why, there was my old father, he used to try 'Old Hundred,' but he had so little ear for music that he never got more than 'nuddy-oo' of the tune."

"Why, Charles, you don't; you pay very little attention to me," said his wife. "Well, my dear," observed the wicked husband, "did you ever see a man run after me, after he had assailed me?"

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John Birtney.

Mrs. L. had a nursemaid, not long over, who, in airing her young charge one day, met with a bicycle club of ten going at full speed. On returning to the house, she exclaimed, "Oh! mump, the baby nearly lit out of his carriage for a moment, for he saw tin mine riding in this philosophy!"

It was on the piazza of a fashionable seaside hotel. Mrs. Croxson, who had just come from her cottage, over a long stretch of concrete walk, seemed decidedly warm. "Don't you find it tiresome to come so far for your meals?" asked a lady. "Oh, I would not mind it," was the reply, "if those consecrated pavements were not so hot."

"Leonora, Miss Twentysix," said Crimmon back to the village school-teacher, "my boy says you kissed him the other day for saying his lesson. Is that so?" "Yes, sir," timidly replied the pinster. "Well," continued Crimmon back, "don't let that encourage him. If there is any punishing to be done, I'll attend to him."

The Sincere Tie.—"And so now they're engaged? Well, Jessie, to think of you, with your beauty and accomplishments, and your lovely voice, being out by such an ignorant little fellow as that Maggie Quicksilver! You say to him, I suppose?" "Yes, mamma, by the hour! But she made him sing, you know, and played his accompaniments for him!" "Why can he sing?" "No, mamma; but she made him believe he could!"

"My dear fellow," said a critic, after examining a painting by his artist friend, "do you not see that you have pinned that angel's robe together with a gold brooch? Who ever saw an angel with a brooch?" "Artist, after a moment's reflection, "True, but who ever saw an angel without a brooch?" Critic silenced, but feeling that he had not stated his case properly.

A young lawyer, while making his maiden speech, in defending a little boy for some petty crime in the midst of an impassioned appeal to the twelve good and true men, exclaimed, "Ah, gentlemen of the jury, you see before you this poor trembling boy, without father, without mother, without friends, without counsel." At this point the orator was interrupted by a general titter around the bar, and, to add to his confusion, the judge, who was smiling on the bench, added, "Proceed, brother; the court is with you."

RAISING MARKET CHICKENS.—Landlady: I have a new market man, and think he will do better than the last one. He says his chickens are all raised on the refuse of a cheese factory. Boarder: That does not sound very tempting. Landlady: Well, no; it does not sound so; and yet we all know that such food ought to be very Boarder: good for chickens. At any rate, the new man cannot be otherwise than an improvement on the old one. Landlady: You think so, then? Boarder: Oh, yes; his chickens were evidently raised to the refuse of an india rubber factory.

THE LAST IN BED.

Old Uncle Plowgit and his wife were holding a sort of love-feast the other night, recounting old times. As the worthy couple slowly prepared to retire, they went over the days gone by in a highly entertaining manner.

"Do you know, Riah, I feel just as young as ever I did!" said Uncle Plowgit, exuberantly.

"So do I, Enoch," spryly responded Aunt Riah.

Then a thought suddenly occurred to Uncle Plowgit, and wheeling on his heel he cried out, "Last in bed blow out the light!" and made a plunge for the side of the couch. His wife, though taken by surprise, was nothing behind him in sprightliness, and their aged heads met about the middle of the bed with a startling thump. Aunt Riah doubled up on the floor, and old Uncle Plowgit, rubbing the top of his head, muttered, "What two damned old fools we be, anyhow!"

A MINISTER exclaimed, "Place me upon the polar iceberg, where no verdure greets the eye, and where naught but the white bear's growl can be heard." And he was disgusted when a deep voice replied, "Amen!"

An ill-tempered man, in rebuking his son for misconduct, said: "When I was your age, my father would not let me go out at night." "A pretty father you had!" answered the son. This maddened the irritable old man, and he vociferated: "I had a great deal better father than you have, you young rascal!"

ONE FIRST.—Doctor: Have you got better of the ague yet? Patient: No, sir; me and my wife is as bad as ever, sir. Doctor: Did you get that whisky and quinine I prescribed? Patient: Yes, sir, but it did no good at all. Doctor: That is strange. You took it according to directions, I suppose? Patient: Yes, sir, you know a man and wife are one. Doctor: What has that to do with it? Patient: Well, sir, being as we are one flesh, I took the whisky and gave Biddy the quinine.

GENTLE CRITICISM.—Mr. B.—These biscuits remind me of mother's. Mrs. B.—Well, I declare! Have you gone crazy? Mr. B.—Oh, my dear? Of course not. Mrs. B.—Well, never expected to hear you say that any of my cooking resembled your mother's. She was a wonderful cook; I have no doubt, for you have said so a million times. Mr. B.—That certainly was. In fact, there was only one dish that she ever failed in. Mrs. B.—What was that? Mr. B.—Biscuits.

Many years ago, when the Duke of Gloucester was in command in Lancashire, the mayor and corporation of Liverpool invited him to a state-dinner, in the course of which the duke, seeing that the duke only took one plate of the turtle-soup, cried out, "Do, pray, your grace, highness, fill your royal stomach; we've plenty more in the kitchen!"

LORD M., with no very large portion of wit or wisdom, had a very excited opinion of his own powers. When once in a large company, and expatiating about himself, he would the following pointed remark: "What happen to say a foolish thing I always come out laughing." "I envy you your laughing, my lord, then," said Charles Townsend, "you must certainly live the merriest life of any man in Europe."

HE HAD BEEN A REVEREND.—A man with blackened eyes, a broken nose, and a swollen arm in a sling, was seen going along one of the streets of Preston the other day. As a acquaintance meeting him inquired the cause of his battered condition. "Have you been through a saw-mill?" he said. "No, sir, no." "Why, what on earth has happened to you, then?" "O, I was refereed at a polo match at the skating-rink, and I decided against the club."

ANXIOUS FOR MOTHER.

"Mamma," said a small boy, "do you believe everything papa says?" "Of course, my child," replied the mother with wifely pride.

"Everything, mamma?"

"Yes, dear, everything."

"Well, I don't."

"Hush, you wicked boy; you mustn't say so. What did your papa ever say that you couldn't believe?"

"You know that widow in the next house who always looks so sour at us boys?"

"You mean that pretty Mrs. Banton?"

"She's the one. I heard papa tell me yesterday that she was the sweetest woman in town, and then he gave her a bunch of roses, and it made me so ashamed to hear him say such a story that I ran away and wouldn't let him know I had caught him in it."

"That will do, my child," said the mother with a peculiar look in her gentle face. "Run out and play, and I will tell your father what he comes in that he must be particularly careful to destroy his son's confidence in his veracity."

SOCIETY.

Great disappointment will be felt at the announcement, says *Society*, that the Queen has definitely decided that no Drawing Rooms are to be held this year. The growing tendency upon the part of Her Majesty to avoid Court ceremonials is greatly deplored by her loyal subjects. Of course the death of the Duke of Albany is the immediate cause of the postponement of the usual State functions this season, but it is well known to those who are brought into close association with the Queen that Her Majesty's disinclination to emerge from her seclusion is attaining greater proportions yearly.

The uncertain state of the weather and the rain at Bandown very much reduced the number of people present at Hurlingham, to see the Americans play a game of La Crosse *versus* South of England; and at five o'clock a polo match began between the Monmouthshire County Club *versus* Hurlingham Club.

There were many pretty and original dresses. A full skirt of *écarlate* was worn with a bodice of cream and painted velvet, with panthers of the same. Bodices of distinct material and colors were worn with many skirts; for example, with a black skirt, a red and black striped bodice. With a dark brown silk skirt a light brown woollen bodice was worn. A Paris gown was a shot silk dark green and red, made in broad plaits, the same silk being introduced at the sides, with stripes of dark red velvet interwoven; the tunic was a shot bunting, dark red and green, bordered with satin *deux tons*; the bodice of the same, with Swiss bodice of the silk, and bonnet to match. A small dress, covered with a floral pattern, was much trimmed with lace, and flounced to the waist. Many velvets were worn.

The Maori King is greatly pleased with his new quarters. He is delighted with London, and has been about a good deal. He has been to see the performance at Drury Lane of *Haverly's Minstrels*; but as the suite cannot quite understand the jokes, though they like the music, they were not so amused as they were at the *Alhambra*. He has been to the Zoological Gardens twice, and was intensely interested. They were also very pleased with their visit to the Botanical Gardens. The King and his suite also visited Madame Tassard's exhibition, and went to the Empire Theatre, where they witnessed the performance of *Chilperic*; also to the House of Commons, where one of them slept soundly for a couple of hours, as impressed was he with the eloquence of the speakers.

A most successful "Old English Fair," in aid of the funds of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has been held in the beautiful grounds of Combe Royal, near Kingsbridge, the residence of Mrs. Eady and Miss Emily Farmer. By the help of painted scenes, originally prepared for a similar entertainment in Plymouth Guildhall, a spacious medieval market-place was constructed on the lawn before Combe Royal House, which itself formed one side of the square.

Here a series of shops, each with its antique "sign" was arranged, and in each was displayed a goodly store of fancy things, contributed by many willing hands and humane hearts, and sold to hundreds of ready customers by gaily-attired dealers. There was a capital hostelry, "Ye Boar's Head," where, at a very moderate charge, a bountiful luncheon could be obtained, and tea later in the day. The costumes were numerous and very suitably got up. Twice in the course of the day these picturesque costumes were marshalled in procession by Admiral Borlase, and marched round the square to the enlivening strains of the Loddiswell band, headed by the rural dean of Woodleigh, in antique and "full canonicals." The very considerable sum of £150 was received during the two days.

STATISTICS.

HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE.—The thirty-five millions of British people annually consume upwards of 300,000,000 quarter loaves; 93,000,000wt. of potatoes; 17,000,000cwt. of vegetables; 30,000,000cwt. of meat; 700,000,000lb. of fish; 5,000,000cwt. of butter; 2,000,000,000lb. of sugar; 170,000,000lb. of tea; 1,000,000,000 gallons of beer; 37,000,000 gallons of spirits, and 14,000,000 gallons of wine; the total cost to the consumers being about £500,000,000, or if we take the net or national expenditure, about £340,000,000. Within the last forty years there has been an enormous increase in the consumption of articles of food and drink in the United Kingdom. Next to the expenditure for food and drink comes the expenditure on articles of dress, principally consisting in cotton, wool, linen, and silk; in boots, shoes, and hats, as well as in gold and silver ornaments and jewelry, involving an expenditure of well nigh £145,000,000 gross, or £123,000,000 net or real value. The house-expenditure comprises about £72,000,000 for house-rent, some £11,000,000 for furniture, estimating only the value of annual additions, £15,000,000 for coal, £14,000,000 for gas, and £5,000,000 for water, making in all £117,000,000. Then there is the expenditure in tobacco, amounting to some £13,000,000 gross, but only £3,000,000 net value. And after this there are expenses for education, literature, newspapers, church and chapel charity, amusements, travelling, taxes, and cost of distribution, the grand total being £880,000,000 gross, and £683,000,000 net per annum.—*Professor Levi.*

GENES.

ACCORDING to the security you offer to her, fortune makes her loans easy or ruinous.

Vice stings us even in our pleasures, but virtue consoles us even in our pains.

The secret of living is to say everything that can be said on the subject.

POPULARITY is not infallibility. Errors exist only while they are popular.

Lost wealth may be replaced by industry, lost knowledge by study, lost health by medicine; but lost time is gone for ever.

He who seldom speaks, and with one calm, well-timed word can strike dumb the loquacious, is a genius or a hero.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A GOOD CAKE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN.—One and a half pounds of bread dough; half-pound of currants, half-ounce of caraway seed, six ounces of sugar, three eggs, half-pound of butter. Spread out the dough on the paste-board, roll it well out, rub in the currants and sugar, then add the butter, and lastly the eggs. Mix all well together, leave it to rise, put it into a tin, and bake it an hour in a moderate oven.

GOOSEBERRY TRIFLE.—Put one quart of gooseberries into a jar, with sufficient moist sugar to sweeten them, and boil them until reduced to a pulp. Put this pulp at the bottom of a trifle-dish; pour over it a pint of custard, and, when cold, cover with whipped cream. The cream should be whipped the day before it is wanted for table, as it will then be fluffier and more solid. The dish may be garnished as fancy dictates.

A VERY NICE DISH OF COLD LAMB AND CUCUMBERS OR SPINACH.—Fry slices or chops of cold lamb till they are slightly browned; dip the slices in bread crumbs, chopped parsley, and yolk of egg. Some grated lemon and a little nutmeg may be added. Fry them; and pour a little good gravy over them when served. The various methods of dressing mutton are applicable generally to lamb.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A BUNCH of royal hair is used to sweep before the shrine of Buddha in the Buddhist College at Colombo. The hairs came from the head of the King of Cambodia, who was purposedly shorn for this pious duty.

Two female municipal councillors have been elected in France for the first time—much to the delight of Mlle. Hubertine Aucler and the Women's Rights party. One was chosen by the nobler Normans at Honfleur; in the department of the Seine Inférieure, the other gained a majority of thirty-eight over her masculine competitors in the Lot-et-Garonne.

BE NOT AFRAID.—Lord Nelson, when a little boy, was on a visit to an aunt, and went in search of birds' nests. He wandered so far that he did not return till some time after it was dark. The old lady, who had been much alarmed by his absence, reprimanded him severely, and asked him how fear came not to drive him home. "I don't know," said the boy, with great simplicity, "who fear is."

Lost and strayed children would no longer worry their families and the police if all parents on a journey or a holiday adopted the ingenious plan of a Danish emigrant to the Far West. This wise father linked his thirteen children together by a small rope tied round the arm; and in this fashion they travelled from Denmark across the Atlantic to Milwaukee, where their arrival created considerable amusement.

The tomb of the unfortunate Major André in Westminster Abbey has lately again been defaced by the stealing of André's head from his figure in the fresco on the monument. This is the sixth act of sacrilege at this tomb; the heads of André and of Washington—also prominent in the fresco—having each been taken away three times. It is supposed by relic-hunting Americans. This last theft was committed during an organ recital by Dr. Briggs, and a new head has now been deftly fitted on once more.

ROBIN HOOD.—Like other heroes, great and small, it appears that Robin Hood is in considerable danger. Not long ago some one suggested that he is no more than "the last survivor of some degraded deity," and now Mr. Isaac Taylor writes to a literary contemporary to point out that he is perhaps only the result of that sun-myth which is so constantly turning up under unexpected forms. William Tell, we know, has long ago been consigned to this sort of immortality, and Mr. Taylor brings together many circumstances which go far to establish the theory of the solar explanation of Robin Hood. The Nottinghamshire hero is the Hero of Northern mythology (the Hotherns of Sixe Grammaticus gets very close to the name), "the good avenger, the last reflection of the Sun God," as Professor Max Muller says, by whatever name called. Like other solar heroes he has his faint reflection in Little John, who stands as Patroclus to Achilles, or Gunner to Sigurd in other forms of the legend; and Maid Marian becomes no less a personage than the dawn-maiden whom the mythologists have found to their satisfaction in Byrnild, and perhaps also in Eriels and Guinevere. If so, however, it is worth noticing that in our midland legend the charms of the dawn maiden do not seem to have worked any such dire effect as they do in some of the other versions. It might, perhaps, be added that the guarded gold of the Nibelung story which is stolen by the solar hero is to be found in the treasure of the "proudest barony of Nottingham" which Robin Hood and his merry men convey. Lastly, Mr. Isaac Taylor observes—and this is really significant—that the Robin Hood ballads and legends are localized precisely in those parts of England in which the Scandinavian element was known to be the strongest.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DORA.—We cannot advertise business addresses in this department.

E. M. S.—In throwing dice, ties throw over again, if it be necessary to establish any result.

B. L. N.—A divorce obtained by either party for the cause assigned would not be legal in this State.

C. N. H.—Benzine, which can be procured at any druggist's, will remove grease from cloth.

M. D.—A penny-wedding is one where the guests contribute to the household outfit.

D. F. G.—1. Saturday, September 7, 1867. 2. A boy of sixteen should weigh from 110 to 115 pounds.

T. N.—Perhaps the janitor of the building can give you some information concerning its early history.

CORIFWA.—Azrael, in the Jewish and Mohammedan mythology, is the name of an angel who watches over the dying, and separated the soul from the body.

W. G. T.—1. Bird lime is made by boiling linseed oil until it becomes a viscous paste. 2. It can be obtained at any bird fancier's.

A. R. G.—We cannot inform you where the coins in your possession can be sold, as business addresses are never furnished through this medium.

D. T. R.—Get some mutual friend to give you an introduction to the object of your adoration. This is the proper way to make her acquaintance.

E. N. M.—1. One sample of hair is light brown, while the other is quite dark. 2. The penmanship and composition of your epistle are both beautiful. 3. No premium on the coin mentioned.

L. M. S.—Consult a physician, as the trouble is doubtless caused by a disordered stomach, although it may be an attack of erysipelas. In either case medical advice should be sought.

F. P. W.—Wait for a year or two before engaging yourself to the young lady. Being of such a tender age, it would be rather foolish to enter into a contract which you might regret in a few years.

T. R.—Judicious exercise with dumb-bells, Indian clubs, horizontal and parallel bars, will tend to develop the muscles, and thus strengthen the system. Walking, running, jumping, rowing, &c., are also to be recommended.

A. L. B.—1. The name of Cain's wife is not known; nor is it related in what country she was born, as may be seen on reference to the fourth chapter of Genesis. 2. Tuesday, December 2, 1863; Friday, July 24, 1868. 3. Your handwriting is not quite up to the average.

R. S. G.—Arithmetical problems, puzzles, "catch" questions, and the like, cannot be answered here. By carefully studying the analysis of the problem, as given in the arithmetic, you will quickly gain a thorough understanding of it.

T. C. D.—1. The lady is beautiful, but seems to esteem you highly. Gain her love by degrees, and do not feel discouraged at any such slight rebuffs as those described. 2. Your handwriting, spelling, and grammar are all above the average.

M. W. R.—1. We cannot recommend any particular life insurance company. 2. A letter addressed to those you may select will elicit the information you desire. 3. Each company has its own mode of doing business. 4. The older the person the higher the premium.

LILLIE BELL.—The simplest way to get rid of ants is to trace them, if possible, to their nests, and destroy them with hot water. Powdered borax sprinkled around the infested places will sometimes exterminate both red and black ants.

CARRIE.—A young lady of taste and judgment ought to be able to decide such a matter better than one man in a thousand could determine it, or else there is little truth in the old adage that "it is the business of men to provide homes and the province of women to beautify them."

E. E.—1. Saturday, January 25, 1868. 2. You are a demi-blonde, belonging to neither of the decided styles of blonde and brunette, but more inclined towards the former. About the average height and weight. 3. Depend upon nature to develop you, and do not resort to artificial means.

S. D. L.—We would like to oblige you, but cannot undertake any detective work. Young ladies should exercise great care in making acquaintances, and not rely on advertisements of persons desiring to correspond with them. There are doubtless many young men who would be only too happy to become acquainted with you.

P. V. C.—1. The only way to break yourself of the habit is to exercise your will. Otherwise, the most disastrous consequences will ensue. A first-class physician will furnish you with the medicine calculated to relieve the symptoms described. 2. Weight and height are below the general average of healthy persons.

C. C. M.—The old custom of refusing burial in a churchyard to murderers and suicides is not in vogue now, although in many instances priests and ministers refuse to perform church rites over the bodies of such persons. In olden times in England, the punishment inflicted on a suicide consisted in an ignominious

burial in the highway, with a stake driven through the body, and without Christian rites. The legal consequence was forfeiture of goods and chattels to the Crown. At the present time the only consequences are forfeiture of goods and deprivation of Christian rites, the burial taking place in a churchyard between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 midnight. The consecration of ground in a cemetery is a religious ceremony.

H. Y. R.—We have never heard of nor seen printed directions for flitting by the eye, but can bear witness that there is such an accomplishment taught by nature to every pretty girl in the land, and very generally understood by gentlemen who have mingled in society to any extent.

L. A. L.—Wet the mildewed linen with soft water, rub it well with white soap, then scrape some fine chalk to powder, and rub it well into the linen. Lay it out on the grass in the sunshine, and keep it damp with soft water. Repeat the process the next day, and the mildew will disappear entirely.

E. L. D.—Take plenty of exercise, bathe frequently, keep good hours, and indulge in plain, healthy food, and it is likely that the bloom in your cheeks will be rendered very perceptible. Do not on any account use artificial means, as by so doing the skin will in time become parchment-like and unsightly.

D. P. S.—The numeral notation to which you call our attention was used by the Greeks. They divided the twenty-four letters of the alphabet into three classes, and by adding another symbol to each class, they had characters to represent the units, tens, and hundreds. The present system is far more convenient.

JUNE AND DECEMBER.

'Neath the silver summer moon

Once we stood, love, you and I,

All our life's rare golden June

Drifting like a rose-leaf by;

"Sweet," you whispered low to me,

"Moons may wane and star-shine flee,

Through June glow and winter gloaming

I will still be true to thee."

Now the solemn winter moon

Bathes the earth in icy light,

And beneath the stars alone

Standing this December night,

Moons have waned and Junes have fled

With the vows you lightly made,

And th' heart you won is breaking:

You are false, and joy is dead.

B. G.

EMMIE.—Your handwriting is hardly firm and distinct enough for a copyist. The principal work of copyists consists in copying legal papers and documents. Telegraphy, type-writing, bookkeeping, &c., are employments which are now open to women, but special education is requisite in order that one may be fitted to pursue any of them successfully.

A. G. M.—1. We cannot advertise any business firm in this department. 2. Gentian—pronounced as if spelled *jen-shan*—is the popular name of a genus of herbs of a bitter taste, and is much used in medicine as a tonic. Gentian-root is the root of several species of gentians, obtained in the European Alps, from which the Swiss obtain a liquor held by them in high estimation. 3. Gentian-root can be procured at any drug store.

G. M.—1. In breaking off a correspondence it is usual for the one taking the initiative step to give his or her reason for so doing, although it is not obligatory. 2. Having a capital of £1,000, and bright prospects in your profession, there is no obstacle to your marriage from a financial point of view. Propose by all means, and there is no doubt of your after happiness, if the object of your love is all you claim. 3. If you are very intimate with the lady, it would not be improper to exchange photos. 4. Your penmanship is hardly suitable for office work.

EMMIE G.—1. Marie Antonette was possessed of a weak, vacillating, pleasure-loving disposition, an aristocratic indifference to public opinion, and a lamentable ignorance of the actual misery of the French people at the time in which she lived. They suspected her of secretly plotting to deliver the country into the hands of its enemies, and their intense hatred for her culminated in her arrest while attempting to leave Paris. She was condemned to death by the Revolutionary Tribunal on October 15, 1793, and guillotined the following day. 2. December 25, 1810, came on a Tuesday.

W. M. G.—1. Inquire at the post-office in your town. 2. One penny. 3. Brazil occupies more than two-fifths of the South American continent, and has, after Russia, the most extensive contiguous territory of any government on the globe. Its population has been variously estimated, but ten millions is thought to be the nearest approximation to the truth. As a nation, the people of Brazil—especially the more educated classes—are hospitable and courteous, though somewhat ceremonious and proud. The soil of Brazil is as varied as its climate. As a rule, the lands surrounding the large and populous cities are very rich and productive. The pasture lands are magnificent, and eminently suitable for cattle raising. Manufactures are not in an advanced state as yet, but every year shows an increase of factories for the production of cotton goods and the coarser fabric. The first

cotton factory in Brazil was built by an American near Rio de Janeiro, at which place very good silks are also made. There are saw mills in various parts of the country, and the province of San Paulo has some large iron works. In the large cities there are gold and silver smiths—mainly foreigners.

J. C. J.—Olla podrida is a Spanish national dish, consisting of several kinds of meat cut up into small pieces, and stewed with a variety of vegetables. This dish is a great favourite with the poor, and is kept so long that its odour and flavour become highly offensive. It is commonly used, like pot pourri, metaphorically to denote a medley.

G. A. E.—If the nail of your toe be hard, and apt to grow round, and into the corners of your toe, take a piece of broken glass and scrape the top very thin; do this whenever you cut your nails, for, by constantly so, it makes the corners fly up and grow flat, so that it is impossible they should give you any pain.

B. F. K.—1. Do not leave your home until assured you can do better elsewhere. In the meantime endeavor to improve your handwriting. In time you may get a situation as copyist. 2. The Emperor of Germany is Wilhelm I.; Emperor of China, Kwong Shu; Sultan of Turkey, Abdul-Hamid-Khan. 3. Fair.

AMOR.—Grease a plate with lard, and set it where ants congregate; place a few bits of wood so the ants can climb on the plate easily; they will forsake any food for lard; when the plate is well covered with them, turn it over a hot fire of coals, they will drop into the fire, and you can then re-set the plate for another catch. A few repetitions will clean them out.

L.V.D.—A morganiatic marriage is the term for a marriage concluded between a man of superior and a woman of inferior rank, in which it is stipulated that the latter and her children shall be entitled neither to the rank nor to the possessions of the husband, the dowry being in lieu of all other privileges. Marriage of this kind is not infrequent in the princely houses of Germany, and one of the most noted was that of King Frederick William III. of Prussia with the Countess Auguste von Harrach, who thereupon received the title of Princess of Liegnitz.

T. V. S.—The following is a crimson stain that is frequently used for musical instruments:—Ground Brazil wood, one pound; water, three quarts; cochineal, half-an-ounce; boil the Brazil wood with water for an hour, strain, add the cochineal, boil gently for half-an-hour, when it will be fit for use. This is first applied, and then the varnish, consisting of rectified spirits of wine, half-a-gallon; add six ounces of gum sandarac, three ounces of gum mastic, and half-a-pint of turpentine varnish; put the above in a tin can by the stove, frequently shaking till well dissolved; strain, and keep for use. If you find it harder than you wish, thin with more turpentine varnish.

C. L. G.—Nails are usually divided into cut nails, so called because they are cut out of iron plates, and wrought nails, which are made from wrought iron. Different kinds are named from their shape, use, &c., as shingle, trunk, and harness nails, and backs, heads, and spikes. Some are called also fourpenny, sixpenny, eightpenny, and tenpenny nails. The word penny, thus used, is supposed to have been changed from pound. A six-penny nail was one of which it took a thousand to make six pounds, an eight-penny nail one of which it took a thousand to make eight pounds, etc. So a six-penny nail, pronounced "six-pun-nail," soon came to be called a sixpenny nail, and the same with the other sizes.

W. M. R.—A celebrated firm of lock-makers in London have repeatedly offered rewards of from a guinea to ten guineas to anybody who should pick their locks. Louis XVI. of France, who pretended to be a great mechanic, once succeeded in making a lock that he thought was a wonderfully ingenious thing. He offered a reward to any one who would pick it, and an honest lock-maker picked it in less than five minutes. The king paid the reward, but the lock-maker was beheaded soon afterwards on a charge that was trumped up against him. The king made another lock, and offered a large reward to any one who could pick it. That lock was never picked, for no inventor wanted to be beheaded.

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